SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 39TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

30TH OCTOBER TO 14TH NOVEMBER 2017, UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS, FRANCE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION:

The UNESCO General Conference is one of the two UNESCO Governing Bodies. The General Conference meets every two years to determine the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization. Its duty is to set the programme and the budget of UNESCO. It also elects the Members of the Executive Board and appoints, every four years, the Director-General.

THE KENYA DELEGATION TO THE 39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

The 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference was held at the UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France from 30th October to 14th November 2017.

The Kenya Delegation to the 39th Session of the UNESCO General Conference was headed by H.E. Prof. George I. Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNESCO.

Key members of the Kenya Delegation to the 39th GC included Dr. Lydia Nzomo, Chairperson of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Dr. Evangeline Njoka, Secretary General of the KNATCOM, Prof. Mwenda Ntarangwi, CEO of the Commission for University Education (CUE) and Ms. Njeri Wachira from the Office of the Attorney General.

The Kenya Delegation to the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO was also graced by the participation of Members of the National Assembly, notably the National Assembly Education Commission: Hon. Julius Kipbiwott, MP, Hon. Moses Injendi, MP and Hon. Zuleikha Hassan, MP.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

The following are some of the key highlights of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO:

1. The 10th UNESCO Youth Forum:

The 10th UNESCO Youth Forum was held from 25-26 October 2017. It included the participation of 60 “change makers” who were selected from over 2,500 proposals. All were leading or co-shaping a social initiative related to a UNESCO area of specialization and most have first-hand experience of the many issues being tackled at UNESCO (including school dropout, refugee issues, post-conflict and emergency contexts). Ms. Beverly Mutindi Chogo from Kenya was one of the 13 participants selected from Africa.
2. Election of H.E. Prof. George Godia, to chair the Education Commission

H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNESCO was unanimously elected chair the Education Commission of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

This was a key honor for Kenya, highlighting the confidence of not only the Africa Group, but of all UNESCO Member States on Kenya, notably the area of Education. As Chair of the Education Commission, Ambassador Godia was also a member of the Bureau of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

3. The Leaders’ Forum:

UNESCO convened the Leaders’ Forum of the 39th session of the General Conference on the theme “SDGs and UNESCO’s Role in the Multilateral System” from 31st October to 1st November 2017.

The event offered a platform to leaders from all parts of the world, to reflect on UNESCO’s role in the implementation of the SDGs through its areas of competences and to share views on the ways in which UNESCO can best serve its Member States in leading forward the SDGs. The forum also served as a platform for sharing Member States’ policy approaches and best practices in the implementation of the UNESCO-related SDGs.

4. Election of the President of the General Conference:

The 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO unanimously elected H.E. Mrs Zohour Alaoui, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Morocco to UNESCO as President of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. Ambassador Alaoui is the first African woman to preside the General Conference of UNESCO.

5. The Election of Kenya into UNESCO Subsidiary Organs

Kenya was successfully elected into the following Subsidiary Organs of UNESCO:

I. The Legal Committee: The Legal Committee considers proposals for the amendment of the Constitution and of the related rules of procedures or regulations. It also considers agenda items referred to it by the General Conference, appeals submitted by sponsors of draft resolutions to the General Conference that have been considered inadmissible by the Director-General, legal questions submitted to it by the General Conference or any of its organs.

II. The Headquarters Committee: The Headquarters Committee coordinates with the Director-General the management policy of UNESCO’s Headquarters and gives the Director-General all guidelines and recommendations that it deems useful. Kenya served as Vice-President of the Headquarters Committee from 2015 to 2017.

III. Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC): The IGBC is the Intergovernmental Body composed of 36 Member States. It examines the work
of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and takes decisions on issues regarding UNESCO’s actions with regard to Bioethics. It promotes reflection on the ethical and legal issues raised by research in the life sciences and their applications. Kenya was also elected Vice-President of the IGBC for the period 2017 to 2021.

IV. International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB): UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments.

V. UNESCO Staff Pension Committee: The UNESCO Staff Pension Committee is a key body responsible that supports the administration of Pension and Retirement Benefits, Interpretation and enforcement of the United Nations Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) regulations and rules to member organizations, Investments of member contributions for eventual payment and the provision of inability payments for staff affected with sickness, accidents while in service of the UN.

6. The Election of the Director General of UNESCO

Ms. Audrey Azoulay (France) was sworn in as the new Director-General of UNESCO on Monday 13 November 2017. Ms Azoulay takes over from Ms. Irina Bokova (Bulgaria) who served 8 years at the helm of the Organization. Ms Azoulay is the 11th Director-General of UNESCO and the second woman to occupy the position.

KEY DEBATES/FORUMS

THE GENERAL POLICY DEBATE:

The General Policy Debate is a special session of the General Conference where Member States make official statements on the key areas of competence of UNESCO. The Kenya Statement was read by H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO, leader of the Kenya Delegation to the 39 GC.

In his statement, Ambassador Godia emphasised innovative achievements by Kenya, such as the increase in Technical Training Institutions in line with Kenya’s Vision 2030, initiatives to include inclusivity in the SDG approach for a full enjoyment of the benefits of the Goals by all, preparations for the establishment of a Geopark in Baringo County, new policies for the promotion of culture and the creative industries, as well as the launching of the Ajira Digital Programme in November 2016 to increase youth livelihood base by empowering them with the tools for online employment, so as to earn a decent income from digital platforms.

THE 39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The following key issues were examined by the different General Conference Commissions and Committees:

1. Intersectoral Related Issues:
The consideration and adoption of draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39C/S)

The conclusions of the 10th UNESCO Youth Forum

Establishment of Category 2 Institutes and Centres in line with UNESCO areas of competence

2. The Education Commission (ED):

- UNESCO’s role in the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda
- Implementation of 38 C/Resolution 72 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories
- Progress report on the preparation of a global convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications
- Conclusions of the Youth Forum as regards education

3. The Natural Sciences Commission (SC):

- UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change
- Proclamation by the United Nations of 2019 as an International Year of The Periodic Table of Chemical Elements
- International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

4. The Social Human Sciences Commission (SHS):

- Challenges and Responsibilities for a Planet in Transition: World Humanities Conference
- Follow-Up of the Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI)
- Draft Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change

5. The Culture Commission (CLT):

- Jerusalem and the implementation of 38 C/Resolution 52
- Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO’s Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict

6. The Communication and Information Commission (CI):

Quebec’s Call for Action: Internet and the Radicalization of Youth

Desirability of a standard-setting instrument on international collaboration in the field of Open Educational Resources (OER)

Strengthening UNESCO’s leadership in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the issue of Impunity

7. The Finance, Administration and General Questions, Programme support and External Relations (APX Commission):

- Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022
- Report by the Director-General, in Cooperation with the Headquarters Committee, on Managing the UNESCO Complex
- Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO
- Financial Report and Audited Consolidated Financial Statements relating to the Accounts of UNESCO for the year ended 31 December 2016 and Report by the External Auditor
- Principles and conditions of the participation programme and emergency assistance
- Staff regulations and staff rules
- Methods of preparing the budget, budget estimates for 2018-2021, and budgeting techniques
- Adoption of the provisional budget ceiling
- Collection of member states’ contributions

8. The Joint Meeting of Commissions (JM):

- The draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5)
- The Adoption of the Appropriation Resolution of 2018-2019

SIDE EVENTS/MEETINGS DURING THE 38TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

The report also provides details of the key side events/meetings that took place during the 39th session of the UNESCO General Conference.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The UNESCO General Conference is one of the two UNESCO Governing Bodies. The other governing body is the Executive Board. The General Conference meets every two years to determine the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization. Its duty is to set the programme and the budget of UNESCO. It also elects the Members of the Executive Board and appoints, every four years, the Director-General.

The General Conference consists of the representatives of the States Members of UNESCO. It is attended by Member States and Associate Members, together with observers for non-Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Each country has one vote, irrespective of its size or the extent of its contribution to the budget.

1.1. THE KENYA DELEGATION TO THE 39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

The 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference was held at the UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France from 30th October to 14th November 2017.

The Kenya Delegation to the 39th Session of the UNESCO General Conference was headed by H.E. Prof. George I. Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNESCO.

Key members of the Kenya Delegation to the 39th GC included Dr. Lydia Nzomo, Chairperson of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Dr. Evangeline Njoka, Secretary General of the KNATCOM, Prof. Mwenda Ntarangwi, CEO of the Commission for University Education (CUE) and Ms. Njeri Wachira from the Office of the Attorney General.

The Kenya Delegation to the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO was also graced by the participation of Members of the National Assembly, notably the National Assembly Education Commission: Hon. Julius Kipbiwott, MP, Hon. Moses Injendi, MP and Hon. Zuleikha Hassan, MP.
H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNESCO (2nd left seated), Amb. Khimulu, former Kenya Amb/PD to UNESCO and Dr. Evangeline Njoka, SG KNATCOM with part of the Kenya Delegation to the 39GC

Dr. Evangeline Njoka, SG KNATCOM (centre), Mrs. Maingi, Ag. Dep. SG KNATCOM (2nd right), Mrs. Ngugi (KICD) (3rd right) with part of the Kenya Delegation and KNATCOM Team to the 39GC
2. KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

The following are some of the key highlights of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO:

2.1. The 10th UNESCO Youth Forum:

The 10th UNESCO Youth Forum was held from 25-26 October 2017. It included the participation of 60 “change makers” who were selected from over 2,500 proposals. All were...
leading or co-shaping a social initiative related to a UNESCO area of specialization and most have first-hand experience of the many issues being tackled at UNESCO (including school drop-out, refugee issues, post-conflict and emergency contexts).

The primary objective of this Forum was to bring young women and men, that are leading innovative initiatives in their countries and communities related to a UNESCO field of competence, together with UNESCO staff members working on youth actions to discuss “Rethinking youth engagement with UNESCO.”

Ms. Beverly Mutindi Chogo from Kenya was one of the 13 participants selected from Africa. She is part of a group of six students from JLUAT who developed SophieBot, a chat app which answers questions on sexuality so as to provide young people with information about sexual and reproductive health.

The Forum adopted a resolution that was discussed by all the programme commissions of the 39th General Conference of UNESCO.

2.2. Election of H.E. Prof. George Godia, to chair the Education Commission

H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNESCO was unanimously proposed by the Africa Group during the 202nd session of the Executive Board to chair the Education Commission of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

In line with the decision of the Executive Board, H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Delegate was proposed by the chair of the Nominations Committee, as chair of the Education Commission, a proposal that was unanimously applauded by the members of the Education Commission.

This was a key honor for Kenya, highlighting the confidence of not only the Africa Group, but of all UNESCO Member States on Kenya, notably the area of Education.

The Education Commission examined 10 items notably, the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5) – Part II. A: Major Programme I – Education (39 C/5) and UNESCO’s role in the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda.

As Chair of the Education Commission, Ambassador Godia was also a member of the Bureau of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

2.3. The Leaders’ Forum

Given the centrality of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all UNESCO’s fields of competence, UNESCO convened the Leaders’ Forum of the 39th session of the General Conference on the theme “SDGs and UNESCO’s Role in the Multilateral System” from 31st October to 1st November 2017.

The event offered a platform to leaders from all parts of the world, to reflect on UNESCO’s role in the implementation of the SDGs through its areas of competences and to share views on the ways in which UNESCO can best serve its Member States in leading forward the SDGs.
The forum also served as a platform for sharing Member States’ policy approaches and best practices in the implementation of the UNESCO-related SDGs.

Heads of State and Government were be invited to deliver 15-20-minute keynote addresses on the proposed theme, with a view to fostering dialogue and fruitful exchanges. The Forum was opened and closed by brief statements by the President of the General Conference and by the Director-General.

2.4. **Election of the President of the General Conference**

The 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO unanimously elected H.E. Mrs Zohour Alaoui, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Morocco to UNESCO as President of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

With more than 30 years of diplomatic experience, H. Exc. Mrs Alaoui has worked closely with the United Nations. As Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, she has worked tirelessly to promote the Organization’s values and advocate for the relevance of its mandate.

Ambassador Alaoui replaces Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa, Deputy Minister of Information and Communication Technology of the Republic of Namibia, who was President of the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

Ambassador Alaoui is the first African woman to preside the General Conference of UNESCO.

2.5. **The Election of Kenya into UNESCO Subsidiary Organs**

Kenya was successfully elected into the following Subsidiary Organs of UNESCO:

I. **The Legal Committee**: The Legal Committee considers proposals for the amendment of the Constitution and of the related rules of procedures or regulations. It also considers agenda items referred to it by the General Conference, appeals submitted by sponsors of draft resolutions to the General Conference that have been considered inadmissible by the Director-General, legal questions submitted to it by the General Conference or any of its organs. Ms. Christine M’kwenda, First Secretary of the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO was unanimously elected Rapporteur.

II. **The Headquarters Committee**: The Headquarters Committee coordinates with the Director-General the management policy of UNESCO’s Headquarters and gives the Director-General all guidelines and recommendations that it deems useful. Kenya served as Vice-President of the Headquarters Committee from 2015 to 2017.

III. **Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC)**: The IGBC is the Intergovernmental Body composed of 36 Member States. It examines the work of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and takes decisions on issues regarding UNESCO’s actions with regard to Bioethics. It promotes reflection on the ethical and legal issues raised by research in the life sciences and their applications. Kenya was also elected Vice-President of the IGBC for the period 2017 to 2021.
IV. **International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB):**
UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments. MAB combines the natural and social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable. Its World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts over 600 sites of which 6 are in Kenya.

V. **UNESCO Staff Pension Committee:** The UNESCO Staff Pension Committee is a key body responsible that supports the administration of Pension and Retirement Benefits, Interpretation and enforcement of the United Nations Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) regulations and rules to member organizations, Investments of member contributions for eventual payment and the provision of inability payments for staff affected with sickness, accidents while in service of the UN.

2.6. **The Election of the Director General of UNESCO**

Ms. Audrey Azoulay (France) was sworn in as the new Director-General of UNESCO on Monday 13 November 2017. Ms Azoulay takes over from Ms. Irina Bokova (Bulgaria) who served 8 years at the helm of the Organization.

Born in 1972, Ms Azoulay was France’s Minister of Culture and Communication from February 2016 to May 2017. She occupied senior positions in France’s public broadcasting sector and then served as rapporteur to France’s public auditing authority, the *Cour des compte*, and as a European Commission legislative expert on issues of culture and the media.

Ms Azoulay is the 11th Director-General of UNESCO and the second woman to occupy the position.

3. **KEY DEBATES/FORUMS**

3.1. **THE 10TH UNESCO YOUTH FORUM: RETHINKING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITH UNESCO**

On 25 and 26 October 2017, 60 young women and men from all regions of the world who are leading ground-breaking change in their countries and communities related to a UNESCO field of competence – met at the 10th UNESCO Youth Forum. The Forum, entitled “Rethinking Youth Engagement with UNESCO”, provided the opportunity for exchange and development of recommendations on how to improve engagement between UNESCO and youth to address some of the world’s biggest challenges, including through the development of regional youth spaces.

The overall vision of the UNESCO Youth Forum is that UNESCO needs to be “a platform and catalyst for change where the youth co-creates what the youth needs.” Key constraints
identified include limited access to information, lack of spaces for dialogue, lack of sustainability in youth engagement, difficulty for youth-led initiatives and genuine partnership, lack of need-based approaches, inadequate timing and design of the Youth Forum.

**Nada Al-Nashif, ADG for Social and Human Sciences:** She welcomed participants and informed that the 10th Youth Forum follows almost two years of rethinking of the process noting that although the UNESCO has always relied on the dynamism of youth but it has usually been as beneficiaries. She recalled that the process was guided by Agenda 2030 whose key motto is “no one left behind”.

**Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General:** She welcomed the Youth to UNESCO, and stated that she wanted to see the organization rejuvenated with new ideas. She asked the youth to speak out because the world has been dramatically changed in recent years and everyone should be involved.

She observed that 1.8 billion people in the world are between the ages of 10 and 24 years of age and pointed out that young people today are more educated than ever before but have bigger challenges than. She informed that UNESCO believes in the youth not just because they should be involved in taking decisions, “you are not just leaders of tomorrow but leaders of today, to be a leader you need to make yourself heard”.

She recalled that two years ago the United Nations enacted the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement and stated that these two items are two parts of the same agenda as we are all together on the same planet and we can only move together with a more inclusive model. She observed that we need to encompass all peoples even those perceived as fragile and vulnerable and said that the youth have every right to find work and aspire to peace.

**Video message by Jayathma Wickramanayake; UN Secretary General Envoy on Youth**

Ms. Jayathma noted that over half of the world’s population is under 30 and hence the youth is important today. She stated that this forum will also inform the regional youth spaces that UNESCO will open in all regions of the world and which will be critical in engaging youth. She urged the participants to use this opportunity raise the bar; “many of you are leading ground-breaking opportunities in your communities”. She urged the participants of the Youth Forum to be bold and to challenge the status quo.

**The role of UNESCO in Youth**

Maria and Cristina, co-organiser of the UNESCO youth forum working on specific policies and coordinator for operational strategy for the youth respectively then explained what UNESCO brings to the table and to clarify how the organization can offer opportunities to engage the youth. They noted that there is a need to find new ways to involve young people and that UNESCO wants tangible and bold but feasible solutions.

**Mode of work of the Youth Forum**

The youth participants were then divided into working groups according to a questionnaire they had filled out earlier. The groups were assigned issues for discussion and subsequently
submitted a report of them to the entire group afterwards. These would then constitute recommendations and presentations to the General Conference.

- Young women and men co-shaping UNESCO’s work
- What are the opportunities and constraints we need to address in the short-term in each of these topic areas
- What support do I need as a youth change-maker?
- Designing regional youth spaces.

After the two-day youth meeting some youth remained behind to draft the recommendation and present them to the committees and commissions of the UNESCO General Conference.

Closing Session:

Stanley Mutumba Simataa, President of the 38th UNESCO General Assembly

He noted that for the first time in the history of UNESCO the value of the youth forum is not measured by numbers but by their respective trajectories which is a testament to their hard work and resourcefulness. He observed that the 10th Youth Forum participants were people who had overcome fears and their own limitations in order to make change happen. He pointed out that their recommendations are tangible and bold enough to place UNESCO at the cutting edge, the edge between the comfort zone and what is needed to go the extra mile. He added that this is exactly what the UN organization needs today – to be challenged.

Quoting the adage ‘if you want something to change then you have to change something’, he observed that there is no excuse anymore for working towards achieving the 2030 Agenda without counting on the youth as their recommendations contribute to the seeds of change. He noted that their vision of UNESCO as a platform and catalyst for change where the youth co-creates what the youth needs was powerful and fully in line with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda which is for the people, by the people, with the people thereby promoting the full ownership of solutions and outcomes of development process and implementation.

He informed that over the next few weeks UNESCO would discuss how to build engagement with the youth as an immediate follow-up to the youth forum. He expressed the commitment of the UNESCO General Conference in discussing these recommendations and considering them in its debates and decisions: “On our part as UNESCO, we will do our best to address your concerns in improving access to the information on UNESCO function for and with the youth, and on creating opportunities for collaboration and the global development”.

Mr. Robert Hong Xiao, the CEO of Perfect World, a major sponsor of the UNESCO Youth Forum also addressed the participants.

Report of the Youth Forum to the General Conference

The report centred on three main topics:

A. Youth engagement with UNESCO
The following set of overarching recommendations were proposed to transform the way the organization engages with youth.

- Making information more accessible
- Building a space for dialogue which involves youth
- Reconsider the time and design of the UNESCO Youth Forum – should be well in advance of the UNESCO General Conference.
- Building youth leadership into designing the programmatic approach of the Youth Forum.

**B. Thematic recommendations for initiatives #WithYouth**

The youth forum made some proposals in answer to the following questions:

- Building education systems that cater to vulnerable populations (i.e. refugees, disabled etc.) how can we build more awareness and support for these initiatives?
- Improving education quality by and for students – how can youth be more involved in new and innovative ways to improve the quality and effectiveness of education systems?
- What is the role of youth in co-producing knowledge and developing and using technological and business innovations to address environmental degradation, water security and other sustainable development issues while making them more available to the general public?
- How can youth be more involved as change agents in the prevention of violent extremism, in particular in divided and conflicted societies?
- What are ways in which youth populations can be more involved in shaping and building more responsible legislation on issues that are complex?
- How can we make each and every young person a more effective cultural ambassador as a mechanism to catalyse socio-economic development that is respectful of cultural diversity?
- How can youth populations be more involved and catalysed in safeguarding, transmitting cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible?
- How can we as youth change-makers use and influence different media platforms and take advantage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to raise awareness around complex issues such as hate speech, human rights abuses and climate change?
C. Recommendations to support initiatives #ByYouth

More suggestions were also made to support the youth to unlock their ability in achieving impact, through more readily available capacity building particularly in areas in which they lack of skills. Ensure that there are spaces for youth to connect with one another, with other leaders and media.

UNESCO YOUTH FORUM PARTICIPANT FROM KENYA

Beverly Mutindi Chogo was one of the 13 participants selected from Africa. She was also one of the few people chosen to remain behind to finalise the forum’s recommendations and present them to the 39th UNESCO General Conference.

She is part of a group of six students from JKUAT who developed SophieBot, a chat app which answers questions on sexuality so as to provide young people with information about sexual and reproductive health.

SophieBot is an intelligent system that is fed with verified information on sexuality and sexual reproductive health and relays the information to its users through conversations that are driven by text or voice chats. Her features include anonymous forums and digital chat bots built in on the app, Facebook, Telegram, Messenger and Twitter. It sources its answers from 10,000 base questions.

Talking about sexual health in the Kenyan society is not only awkward but also taboo. The result is that entire generations without the right information on sex and sexual health make ill-informed and bad decisions. This has led to high HIV prevalence, STI prevalence, early pregnancies, unsafe abortions and irresponsible use of morning after pills. SophieBot is a measure to remedy this.

3.2. THE LEADERS’ FORUM

The Leader’s Forum, held on the theme of the “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UNESCO’s Role in the Multilateral System”, saw nine leaders of Governments and Presidents deliver perspectives and strategies undertaken in their countries on the indicated theme. Keynote addresses reflected on UNESCO’s role in the implementation of the SDGs through its work in education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information and shared on national policy approaches and best practices in the implementation of the UNESCO-related SDGs.

H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, in his speech underlined the challenges faced by multilateralism, and the current circumstances of previously unknown higher stakes of disengagement from the multilateral system. H.E. Lajčák then
presented a four point address concerning the future of multilateralism and UNESCO’s role in it, as follows:

- **Role of Multilateralism**: Multilateralism is a nexus for advancing peace, allows a rally of support for peace agreements, as well as for a more rapid mobilization against threats to international peace and security. H.E. Lajčák announced that negotiations will soon be launched to create the first international framework for ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration.

- **UNESCO plays a critical role in multilateral system**: UNESCO has rallied actors from all over the world to protect the shared cultural heritage, and promoted cooperation for advances in education, science and technology, to the benefit of all. As a critical specialized agency, it has offered vital support to many UN initiatives, and its role in the multilateral system is defined by people – by the impact that its work has on men, women, boys and girls.

- **Need for Dialogue**: An imperative to go beyond ceremony, and to take action by prioritizing real interaction, and real dialogue, as despite diverse backgrounds and diverging interests, time and experience have shown that convergence can be found - particularly when it comes to human dignity, peace, the protection of our environment, and our common humanity. H.E. Lajčák emphasised that Multilateralism cannot be a competition where the most powerful prevail, and leaves no room for dialogue to be replaced by a succession of monologues. As the defences of peace cannot be constructed on the battlefield, it must instead be built in minds through dialogue and exchanges before it is too late. He advocated that the United Nations must lead the charge, acting as an honest broker, leveraging its neutrality and experience for meaningful dialogue.

- **Cooperation between UNESCO and the UN General Assembly** on many issues including Peace-building and sustaining peace, water and sanitation, Youth, education and the prevention of violent extremism, Climate change, Financing for development, Migration; underlining UNESCO’s emphasis on the human face of migration and the many links between the priorities of the UN General Assembly and the experiences and expertise of UNESCO.

H.E. Lajčák ended his speech with a call to recommit to multilateralism and to mobilize to strengthen UNESCO and the wider UN system.

**H.E. Henry Pua, the Prime Minister of Cook Islands**, in addressing the theme SDGs and UNESCO’s role in the Multilateral System, raised the questions: *what is UNESCO’s role in the new global agenda? To which sustainable development goals does UNESCO contribute? Where should the focus be?*

**H.E. Pua** advanced that to consider UNESCO’s strength and contribution to all the goals of our global agenda, it is essential to look through the lens of the specific underlying principles of the SDG agenda and how they can be part of UNESCO’s approach at the programme level. His address focused on the underlying principles of national ownership, inclusivity, integration, interlinkages and multi-lateral stakeholder partnerships – as approaches and modalities.
The Prime Minister chanted a traditional Maori song to bring home his point. The chant spoke of ‘the seafarer Iro looking to bring his vaka (canoe) carrying his people, through the passage and onto land’; of ‘being prepared, patient, watching the waves, the currents the environment; and of preparing one’s self and others to work together to safely go through the passage’. It spoke of identifying problems, issues, challenges and opportunities, working together to address them, in order to safely reach land. It spoke of drawing on the value of experience and practices from the past; of being willing to ask others for advice and knowledge. The chant, H.E. Pua emphasised, was about people learning to work together, with a shared understanding of their goal; about people understanding their role, and how by collaborating with others, the desired outcome could be reached for all.

H.E. Pua further underscored that for the Cook Islands, as a Pacific Island, the ‘vaka’ and voyaging were crucial to their existence: the concept of voyaging, of learning from one’s environment, of accepting the wisdom and understandings of those gone before, and of working with nature. He paralleled that in our global humanity, speaking of “our vaka” helps to define who we are and the voyage we are on as individuals, communities and as nations.

Reverting to the Cook Islands World Heritage Marae Moana legislation, H.E. Pua underlined that it covered all the islands of the Cook Islands, but enabled the local government and leaders of each island, to develop their own island marine plan, with the assistance of legislated technical guidance and support, thus setting up the potential for diverse approaches to marine management, based on an island’s specific environmental conditions and its community’s unique situation. The system passes ownership at an island level to the people of a specific island, thereby empowering them to take management decisions, at the local level.

In a similar vein that there was a huge diversity in the starting points of member states across and within the SDGs, and thus a need for UNESCO programme areas to develop their own plans, so as to ensure a modality of working from the ground up – by finding the points of commonality in Member States, whilst supporting individual results “like a teacher planning a lesson for a class of different levels, and learning styles”. H.E. Pua advanced that facilitating nationally developed responses, rather than presenting already designed programmes, is key. The facilitative approach, he added, is particularly important for Goal 4.7, where responses will need to come from the communities of young people, as the goal gives them the skills to navigate the world ahead. Creating the space, and supporting the space for countries to work in this way, facilitating problem solving with countries or clusters of countries, in order to find their own solutions, will be important if the work UNESCO undertakes is to be sustainable and relevant, beyond the 2030 agenda itself.

H.E. Pua further advocated that Member States had a responsibility to be open about where they needed support – “not to hide things that haven’t worked, but put them out there for all to see, and ask others for suggestions and advice”. Likewise, he added, “when a country is successful in an approach”, the inclination should go to “putting it out there for all to celebrate, and learn from” rather than “worry about others copying it and getting ahead”. 
To end his address, **H.E. Pua** drummed on the importance of considering interconnecting areas in sustainable development strategies when developing a response so as to ensure the intended activity can be “supported” and not adversely impact interconnected areas. He furthered that strong institutional arrangements are needed for information sharing and regular dialogue, and for tangible outcomes through an integrated approach. Intersectoral work within UNESCO will therefore become primordial as “working in silos will achieve little” and a multi-disciplinary, interlinked and integrated approach is more efficient and effective. As an example to underscore his point, he mentioned that a goal on poverty eradication needs to consider gender and youth; and one on climate action needs to consider water, sanitation, education as well as culture. The UNESCO Taskforce set up to ensure an effective approach by the agency, will therefore need to constantly reflect on the inter-connectedness of the goals, and the need to integrate responses. They will also need to reflect on where working with other multi-lateral agencies with intersecting mandates, leads to efficiencies. Member States, he added, can provide assistance in these “conversations”, as well as data and feedback so that informed decisions can be made.

**H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta**, the President of Mali in his speech appreciated the efforts of UNESCO to make the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (Baku Forum) a place for strategic encounters and dialogue on the question of violent extremism.

He underscored Mali’s firm support for intercultural dialogue, informing of the 39 General Conference side events organized by Mali on the dialogue of culture - events which includes, he added, the screening of the emblematic 1984 documentary film by Jean Rouch and Amadou Hampate Ba, the Malian writer and ethnologist, showcasing the stakes of intercultural dialogue between the Western and African cultures. The film, an epic reminder of the necessity for dialogue among civilisations to enhance and reinforce world peace, traces the encounter of the French ethnologist on African cultures, Jean Rouch, with a living symbol of these same cultures Amadou Hampate Ba in his home in Abidjan. Their conversation, **H.E. Keita** added, strongly illustrates that man must take a step towards the other, for one’s own accomplishment and enrichment.

The President also thanked the Director General for achieving her promise of intervening in Timbuktu, Mali following the attacks on the Mali World Heritage Mausoleums and the burning of Timbuktu Manuscripts by terrorists. The appeal made by the Director-General to the international community and subsequent implementation of the Malian World heritage reconstruction plan by UNESCO was widely successful, leading to the completion of Phase I of the programme and the reconstruction and reopening of the Mausoleums in Timbuktu in June 2016. The President encouraged continuing support for the implementation of the Phase II of the programme. He expressed the wish that upon the completion of the restoration process
of the Timbuktu manuscripts, their content be displayed and adequately utilised by UNESCO to the benefit of all.

Regarding the Abu Dhabi Conference held in December 2016 followed by the conference at the Louvre, **H.E. Keita** appreciated the opening on new perspectives in the mobilisation of efforts for the protection of our common heritage. He called on the international community and most particularly African States to diffuse the General History of Africa for pedagogical purposes, and encouraged the completion of the 9th volume underway.

**H.E. Keita** congratulated Mrs Bokova on her successful 8 year mandate at the head of UNESCO and transmitted the profound gratitude of Mali for her work and UNESCO’s efforts for Timbuktu. As homage to the Director-General, he called to the fore a surprise gift for the Director General. The gift: a cultural performance by Malian singer Soussaba Sacko, accompanied by Baba Sacko on the traditional Malian instrument, the kora, ushered in a fashion show of Malian creations by the Nigerien UNESCO Artist for Peace Mr. Alphadi Seidnaly, whose red suit jacket creation was worn by Mrs. Bokova during the session. The Malian President and First Lady also gifted a traditional Malian painting to Mrs. Bokova in full appreciation.
The Leader’s Forum concluded with an address from H.E. Mr. Lech Walesa, the former president of the Republic of Poland, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Mrs. Bokova in her speech presenting H.E. Lech Walesa spoke on Peace and Justice: the humanity global path towards sustainable development. H.E. Walesa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 for his efforts in the 1960s and 1970s, after successfully rallying and leading civil society trade unions to effectively surpass the divisions in Poland, through dialogue and non-violence, thus leading to a successful regime change from Communism. Before opening the floor to the Leader’s Forum interview of H.E. Walesa, Mrs. Bokova in her speech stated that the efforts undertaken by H.E. Walesa is a heritage to inspire today’s society to fight against the divisions and turbulent times plaguing it; against prejudices, mutating conflicts, and discriminations, with the tenacity and courage of H.E. Walesa’s time.

The questions raised to H. E. Walesa centred on - how UNESCO could use its soft power (Education, Culture, Right to Free expression etc.) today to bring us closer to the 2030 Agenda, the economic system to emulate, which ethics or rules for a new world order, and the era of the Word: a foundation to move society forward.

In response H.E. Walesa stated that the 20th century managed to eliminate a lot of the schism that had plagued it, leaving the 21st century a society more privileged (open borders, free movement etc.) than it seems to be aware of, underlining that no former generation had had as much opening to introduce needed changes. He advocated the need for new foundations today as the philosophical foundations formerly held to by society were no longer; philosophical foundations which particularly in Europe at one time were centred on Religion then later on Communism. Upon the elimination of Communism as a social foundation, a new world order built on a free market economy is proposed by one school of thought while others advocate for a need to build the future on the basis of values learnt from the past.

However, H.E. Walesa points out, given that different nations have different values, one must first come up with a commonly agreed set of values upon which our common future could be built; i.e. a ‘secular’ 10 commandments that all could adhere to.

To the question of an appropriate economic system, H. E. Walesa forwarded that neither communism nor capitalism as practiced today was/is sustainable given that today’s high inequalities were a legacy of both systems. He noted that the current economic inequality was increasing in many countries and had become a main source of conflict, political dishonesty, social unrest, strikes and wars, undermining democracy, as 10% of humanity owns 90% of the world’s wealth. As a solution, H.E. Walesa proposes for the “wealthy” or those with the means, to use the wealth to generate wealth by investing in people to create economic opportunities, and to reduce unemployment.

H. E. Walesa further advanced his disbelief that there was not enough work today, adding that the old system of rivalry and rat race, has created the loss of jobs, hence the need to use resources to meet the challenges, explore sectors and create jobs beyond the current offer.
To the question of ethics and rules for a new world order, H.E. Walesa, underlined the need to unharness the economic yoke of the past and come to an agreement on a number of points in order to gradually eliminate injustices. He emphasised that UNESCO is in a prime position for this endeavour, and highlighted the need to take advantage of its meetings to achieve the right diagnosis for the transformations required.

With regards to the effectiveness of democracy, H.E. Walesa advanced that an organized civil society is crucial within the framework of democracy, peace and justice, adding that many believe there’s a current weakening of organised civil society. He noted that indeed it was easy to mobilise thousands in protest today, however there remains an increasing shortage of civil society organisations. He advanced an equation for determining true democracy as follows:

“30% constitution and laws prevailing in a given nation + 30% Behaviour of the society within this legal framework of elections, civil society action etc. + 30% function of the fitness of the social checkbook: the overall social richness...”

He proposed the use of the above formula to determine in which domain one is discontent: to see if one’s laws are too restrictive/limiting, if people are non-participative especially with regards to elections or if people feel left aside by the distribution of wealth.

On the topic of finding common denominators for a shared system of values, a foundation on which to base the future, H.E. Walesa noted the importance of considering that different cultures comprehend terms differently, and that in one area, ‘freedom’ for people living on reservations may mean the ability to “jump a fence” or not live fenced in, while for others it may mean access to certain functions and positions in society.

UNESCO therefore has a role of equalisation, of bringing people to a common denominator and of listening to people coming from different backgrounds; a role that should be utilised and restructured to this effect instead of advocating for its destruction. He further underscored the need to “prepare people to have freedom and democracy” as in his experience a lack of advance preparation meant that people didn’t “know” how to utilise their rights nor democracy once they had acquired it.

H. E. Walesa recalled a time when the world perception stated that only nuclear war could change the world order; a theory later debunked. He therefore advocates for new foundations to guarantee and safeguard democracy. He further recalled when after 20 years of effort, the Polish masses woke to believe in themselves and uniting with one spirit, came together to overcome the struggles. He advocates that in today’s “materialistic intellectual approach to life” there is also a need for a spirit; for a common spirit in the system being built. In that, in combining a common spirit with the potential of the current generation, many difficulties could be overcome.

H.E. Walesa parting points to the hall were a reiteration of the need to find a common foundation as a “house cannot be built without a foundation”, adding that the goal of UNESCO is to bring us to a common agreement of “what should be rejected, what should be kept and what should be added.” He underlined that the current society lives in the “era of the Word” (vocabulary of pursuits: justice, reducing inequality and poverty etc.) and so being the era
requires completely new programmes with goals where inclusivity is indeed key: “how to manage to make people feel a part of the development and make them feel included”.

He strongly underlined that UNESCO and its programmes have all the ingredients that the world needs, but that the organisation was failing “at convincing people”, adding that virtually all organisations had lost their ability to convince, citing the trends on the French political party scene that led to the materialisation of “En Marche”. He underscored the need for UNESCO to consider the differences in mentalities and levels of development, and to ardently convince the world that the programmes proposed are the right fit. He further reiterated the extraordinary opportunity of the present generation to build a third millennium by coming together to do a diagnosis, find solutions and be convincing, and applauded the work of UNESCO and its tremendous potential.

3.3. THE GENERAL POLICY DEBATE

The Plenary of the 39th GENERAL CONFERENCE was held from Monday 30 October 2017 to Tuesday 14th November 2017 at UNESCO Headquarters, Fontenoy. Consisting of two parts, the first section of the Plenary was the Leaders’ Forum and the second the General Policy Debate which was composed of the delivery of National Statements, the election of the new Director-General of UNESCO, and the presentation of Reports from the various General Committees and Commissions including the Recommendations from the Youth Forum, and homage ceremony for Mrs. Irina Bokova, the outgoing UNESCO Director-General.

The Kenya Delegation was led by H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO. The representatives from Kenya at the Commission were Dr. Evageline Njoka, Secretary-General, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM), and Mrs. Christine Maingi, Ag. Secretary-General KNATCOM, Mrs. Grace Ngugi, Acting Deputy Director, Special Programmes, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and Ms. Christine M’Kwenda and Ms. Akuorkor Plahar from the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO.
H.E. Prof. George Godia in his delivery of the Kenya National Statement congratulated H.E. Mrs. Zohour Alaoui, Ambassador/Permanent Delegate of Morocco to UNESCO for her election as the President of the 39th session of the General Conference and Mrs. Irina Bokova, the outgoing Director General for a successful leadership during her tenure, then underlined key milestones and Kenya’s achievements in all the UNESCO areas of competence namely: Education, Culture, Communication and Information and in the Natural and Human Sciences. H.E. Prof. Godia emphasised innovative achievements such as the increase in Technical Training Institutions following Kenya’s Vision 2030 emphasis on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), initiatives to include inclusivity in the SDG approach for a full enjoyment of the benefits of the Goals by all, preparations for the establishment of a Geopark in Baringo County, new policies for the promotion of culture and the creative industries, as well as the launching of the Ajira Digital Programme in November 2016 to increase youth livelihood base by empowering them with the tools for online employment, so as to earn a decent income from digital platforms.

REPLY OF THE DIRECTOR – GENERAL TO THE GENERAL POLICY DEBATE

The General Policy debate continued with the delivery of National Statements by Member States, as well as speeches from civil society and non-governmental organisations such as the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), the International Association of University Professors and lecturers (IAUPL), the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (WFUCA), the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), the International Association of Art (IAA), the International Catholic Centre for Cooperation with UNESCO (CCIC), the Association Universelle d’Esperanto, Rotary International, as well as the NGO International Conference - NGO UNESCO Liaison committee.
Following the conclusion of interventions, Mrs. Irina Bokova closed the General Policy Debate by delivering her reply. She emitted profuse thanks to the Member States for the strong marks of engagement towards UNESCO, for the multiple appreciation and determination expressed to continue strengthening multilateralism and to bolster UNESCO; for the voiced thanks concerning her eight-year tenure as Director General, and for the enriching best policy contributions shared during the Debate. Mrs. Bokova underscored the immense appetite for culture and knowledge articulated through the various national statements and the call to celebrate our common creative diversity, which contribute to the uniqueness of UNESCO. She spoke of building peace in the minds of men, and of the numerous artistes and poets who blazed a path and inspired the programmes of UNESCO, and as such have been UNESCO’s inspiration leading to the innovative new concepts for the world – world heritage, knowledge cities, creative and learning cities, global citizenship etc.

In raising the questions: What rights and values are to be championed in today’s turbulent world? What tools need to be created so as to face the social, ethical and technical upheavals of humanity? Mrs. Bokova underscored UNESCO’s role to lead the discussion and to enable all peoples take charge of their destiny be it through culture, education and knowledge-sharing, in lieu of living in subjection to the evolutions of the world.

The Director General denounced the persecution of Christians in the Near East and their vastly dwindling numbers in Iraq, as well as all forms of anti-Semitism and its increase in sports, culture and in the media, and the persecution of the Royingyas. She stated that UNESCO is sometimes considered the “conscience of humanity” and needs to remain so.

Mrs. Bokova expressed the drive of her eight-year mandate as the objective of reinforcing the linkages UNESCO had built in the world with heritage professionals, artists and researchers etc. and felt UNESCO has a major role to play in advancing regional debates and had sought to restructure the presence of UNESCO on the ground. She emphasised that the success of a project is determined by the men and women who carry it forward: “the talents, the resources, the people”; and to a lesser degree the countless hours spent drafting the said texts and policies for development and peace.

In her statement, Mrs. Bokova further underlined the need to invest in talents and competences especially of the youth, underlining that “each child that is born is a new chances for peace if he has access to a quality education and grows in the respect of his history and that of others. Each child that is born represents a new chance to increase our knowledge and to understand the complex mutations of our planet. UNESCO was built precisely to groom and blossom these talents and human resources as supports for peace and development.”

Echoing the call expressed by Member States through their national statements, of the necessity to invest in competences and in research, in the sciences and in knowledge-sharing, in the numeric age, and in the economy of knowledge and high qualifications, Mrs. Bokova also invited Member States to examine and consider the stand for a stronger governance reform of UNESCO as expressed by Hon. Stanley Mutumba Simataa in his speech as the outgoing president of the General Conference. In response to the multiplicity of challenges today and in seeking answers, Mrs. Bokova warns against voices that call for simplistic, false answers, or for solutions that reduce choices, and added:
“When asked to choose between the protection of heritage and the protection of human lives, we must respond, both are inseparable.

- When asked to choose between attachment to country, and our aspiration to become global citizens, we must respond both are linked.

- When asked to choose between freedom of expression, access to information and strengthening national security, responding to terrorism, to prevent violent extremism, we must respond both go together.

- When people point to cultural diversity as a pretext to infringe upon human rights, we must respond again and again, that cultural diversity and human rights are two sides of the same coin.

- When people say jobs, poverty eradication must take precedence over sustainability, over protecting the planet we must respond that, with a healthy planet, a healthy ocean, everything is possible."

In parting, Mrs. Bokova reiterated the call expressed by Member States to address one of the steepest challenges today: the tyranny of narrow mindedness, to strongly resist the call to choose sides in times of trial. She underlined the ongoing news analysts’ perspectives of a G-zero World with no global leadership, adding that UNESCO’s mission is to “help people think big, think ahead and to widen options for human rights for the benefit of all”, and the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement prove the capacity of Member States to transform new ideas into norms and to frame new agendas on a universal basis.

Members of the Kenya Delegation, from Left to Right: H.E. Prof George Godia, Mrs. Wachira Njeri, Mr. Victor Soo, Mr. John-Paul Oluoich

Members of the Kenya Delegation, from center Left to Right: H.E. Prof George Godia, Ms. Christine M’Kwenda, Mrs. Christine Maingi, Mrs. Grace Ngugi, Ms. Akuorkor Plahar
4. THE 39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

4.1. THE EDUCATION COMMISSION

The Education Commission of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO began with the election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur of the Commission.

The commission unanimously elected H.E. Prof. George I. Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNESCO to chair the sessions. Representatives of Colombia, Pakistan and Turkey were elected as Vice-Chairpersons while the representative of Morocco was elected as Rapporteur.

H.E. Prof. George Godia is unanimously elected and chairs the Education Commission of the 39th GC
In his opening remarks, Ambassador Godia thanked the commission for the confidence put in his capabilities to guide discussions in the commission and also appreciated the Africa Group at UNESCO, for having proposed his candidature.

The Education Commission examined 10 items on its agenda in 5 debates. The following are the key highlights on each debate:

**Consideration and adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5) – Part II. A: Major Programme I – Education (39 C/5)**

This item was introduced by Dr. Qian Tang, UNESCO ADG for Education who informed the commission that the programme has two Main Lines of Action (MLAs) that reflect two of UNESCO’s main functions: Main Line of Action I supports governments in implementation of SDG4 at country level and Main Line of Action II supports the monitoring and coordination of SDG4 at the global and regional levels. Overall, gender equality and a focus on Africa remain twin priorities for the Sector.

The following key issues were raised during the debate:

- The commission welcomed the priorities proposed by UNESCO and expressed their appreciation for the proposed Programme and Budget, its structure and its thematic focus.
• Member States asked UNESCO to continue to prioritize teachers, noting that high quality learning is dependent on well-trained teachers.

• The commission welcomed the intentional alignment of Major Programme I (MP I): Education to SDG4, notably through ensuring that the 10 expected results contribute to 9 out of the 10 SDG4 targets/means of implementation, as well as other education related SDGs.

• The commission also welcomed the strategic focus on four priority areas for the Education sector namely: *sector-wide policy and planning (SWPP), literacy, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and teachers*, with a particular focus on programme implementation on country level.

The proposed decision was adopted with amendments to the updated figures regarding the UNESCO Education related Category I Institutes.

**UNESCO’s role in the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda (39C/44)**

In his introduction, Dr. Tang, UNESCO ADG for Education, UNESCO supports Member States in the operationalization of SDG4 through mechanisms such as E-9 and the Collective Consultation of NGOs as well as the CapED program and the GEM Report.

The following key issues were raised during the debate:

• A number of delegates commended UNESCO for coordinating work on SDG4 through the Steering Committee for SDG4. Some delegates suggested a strong engagement with other coordinating bodies such as Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait Fund.

• Several Member States noted that the UNESCO Field Offices network have an important role to play in ensuring support to Member States and, as such, deserve to be reinforced.

• Delegates also encouraged UNESCO to intensify its efforts to accelerate progress toward SDG 4.7 a goal that speaks to the importance of Education for Sustainable Development, Human Rights and Global Citizenship Education.

• Representatives from NGOs emphasized education as a collective responsibility and called for more inclusive monitoring mechanisms as well as for additional financial resources to implement the SDG4 agenda.

• Concern was expressed regarding the continued financial health of the Global Education Monitoring Report and UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), donors were called upon to increase commitments.

The proposed decision on this item was adopted with some amendments, notably inviting the UNESCO Secretariat to better target middle-income countries and to accelerate progress regarding target 4.7 that deals with Education for Sustainable Development, Human Rights and Global Citizenship Education.
Implementation of 38 C/Resolution 72 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories (39 C/17)

The item, which reports on UNESCO’s activities in the area of education and culture in the occupied Arab territories during the biennium, included a Draft Decision submitted by Palestine, co-sponsored by Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen (39 C/COM ED-CLT/DR.1).

In his introduction, reminded the commission that the proposed Draft Resolution by Palestine had been adopted without debate and by consensus in the last two sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO.

This proved to a contentious issue as four rounds of roll call vote proposed by Israel during the commission. It is in this regard that Ambassador Godia, in his capacity as chair of the Commission, suspended the meeting and facilitated the consultations between the concerned parties, notably Israel, Palestine, United States of America, France and the UNESCO Education Sector.

Through these informal consultations, facilitated by the Chair, the concerned parties reached an agreement which proposed the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus in the Education Commission, and withdrew the same in the Culture Commission. The concerned parties also agreed to adopt the Draft Resolution 4.2 related to Old Jerusalem, by consensus in the Culture Commission. This proposal was also agreed upon by UNESCO’s Legal Advisor and was guaranteed by France.

The concerned parties welcomed the efforts of the chair of the Education Commission in ensuring discussions. These consultations led to an acceptable agreement.
The Education Commission welcomed the agreement and adopted the Draft Resolution by Palestine by consensus and appreciated the chair’s role in ensuring that a consensus was reached and like previous sessions of the General Conference, the draft resolution was adopted without debate.

A number of delegates proposed that Member States revisit the procedural rules of the General Conference to try to prevent similar delays at future meetings. A number of Member States also expressed frustration with the heightened politicization of the Education Commission.

**Consolidated report on the implementation of Member States of the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (39 C/24)**

On this item, the following key issues are to be highlighted:

- UNESCO received 67 national reports from Member States on the measures taken to implement the 1960 Convention.

- The submission of reports have significantly increased for the convention, a positive development.

- The 1960 Convention was noted as a powerful tool to advance progress toward SDG4 and provides legal foundations for the Education 2030 Agenda.
• Special efforts must be taken to ensure equal education opportunities for indigenous people as well as students with disabilities.

The proposed draft decision was adopted with amendments from the Legal Committee.


On this item, the following key issues are to be highlighted:

• 83 Member States replied to the questionnaires concerning 1974 Recommendation.

• The submission of reports have significantly increased for the convention, a positive development.

The proposed draft decision was adopted with amendments from the Legal Committee.

**Recommendation on the implementation by Member States of the 1978 Recommendation concerning the International Standardisation of Education Statistics (39 C/27)**

On this item, the following key issues were raised:

• The Director of UIS explained that UNESCO and UIS want to give Member States sufficient time to adapt their national system existing standards and, for this reason, do not plan to expect the standards set in the present ISCED in the near future.

• The commission voiced support for UNSECO’s normative role and welcomed its efforts to reinforce monitoring of its standard-setting instruments.

• The UNESCO Education Sector and the UIS will continue helping Member States implement the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education and the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding Cooperation and Peace.

• UNESCO will work with Member States to establish international standards to facilitate the recording and use of educational statistics.

The proposed draft decision was adopted with amendments from the Legal Committee.

**Progress report on the preparation of a global convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications (39 C/21)**

On this item, the ADG for Education presented the commission with the work that has been completed to develop a Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications and to inform Member States during the process. He pointed out that UNESCO will have an opportunity to review to adopt a completed Global Convention during the next 40th General Conference.

The following key issues were raised during the debate on this point:
• The commission expressed its high appreciation and support for a Global Convention as well as revisions to regional conventions in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the Arab States.

• Member States thanked UNESCO and Norway for their strong support to the process and mentioned that the Convention represents an opportunity to facilitate the economic and social development of Member States and represents an important step towards the implementation of SDG 4.

• The commission welcomed the proposed timeline for the processes while highlighting that the draft leaves room for harmonization between regional conventions and the Global Convention.

• The draft text for the Global Convention was noted as an excellent starting point for further consultations.

• Kenya shared its experience regarding the development of a National Qualifications Authority and welcomed the process for the development of the Global Convention noting that it will contribute to strengthening the regional conventions.

• Many Member States expressed their wish to adopt the convention in 2019 during the 40th General Conference. Norway announced that it was willing to provide additional financial support to the effort.

• The ADG Education noted that the UNESCO Global Quality Assurance Conference will be clearly linked to the process of the Global Convention on Higher Education.

The proposed decision was adopted with minor amendments.

The resolutions related to the Latin America and the Caribbean Conventions and Arab State Convention were adopted with the proposed amendments.

**Conclusions of the Youth Forum as regards education (39C/47)**

As an introduction to this item, two youth participants, from Kenya and Jordan, presented their respective contributions to their communities through their inspiring work in the field of education.

The following key issues were raised in the debate following the presentation of the conclusions of the Youth Forum as regards education:

• The need for the integration of youth theme in all areas of competence of UNESCO

• There was a call for ensuring that the UNESCO Youth Forum is held much earlier so as to ensure more consultations among youth.

• UNESCO was recommends to push for more transparency in the use of funds by education institutions

The resolution relative to the document examined was adopted unanimously.
Establishment of Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO (39 C/18 Parts XII and XIV)

The Education Commission unanimously adopted the two proposals for the establishment of Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO. The First proposal was for a Centre for Teacher Education at Shanghai Normal University, China. The second proposal was for the establishment of an Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) International Centre in Sanya, Hainan Province, China.

The representative of the People’s Republic of China took the floor and thanked the members of the Commission for the approval.

Presentation of the reports of education-related Category 1 Institutes

The final item concerned the presentations of activities of education-related Category 1 education institutes. The Assistant Director General introduced the item. The draft resolutions regarding these two centres were adopted without debate.

The commission then listened to the reports on the activities carried out during the last biennium presented by the chairpersons of the governing boards of the six UNESCO category 1 institutes in education, namely: IBE: International Bureau of Education, IIEP: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, IITE: UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, IESALC: UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, IICBA: UNESCO Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa and MGIEP: Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development.

Regarding the IBE, the ADG informed the commission of the end of the financial support from the host country, Switzerland. He mentioned that this issue would be followed up by the new Director General and administration.

The representative of Switzerland confirmed the end of financial support to the IBE, however, indicated that this was a “re-orientation” of funding and that Switzerland will continue financially support the UNESCO Education Sector in other aspects.

Chair’s Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Chair expressed his appreciation to the vice chairs, representatives of the Director-General, particularly the Assistant Director General for Education, Mr. Tang, and the Directors and Representatives of UNESCO Institutes and Centres, for their pertinent information, input, explanations and clarifications. Finally, the Chair thanked the legal representatives, the Secretariat of the ED Commission, and all the team involved in the organization of the General Conference.
Ambassador Godia, Chair of the Ed Commission (centre), Dr. Tang, ADG Education (2nd left) and the Education Commission Secretariat Team

Ambassador Godia, Chair of the Ed Commission (4th right) and Education Commission Secretariat Team
Ambassador Godia, Chair of the Ed Commission (seated) with Kenya representatives at the Ed Commission (r to l – Mrs. Mbugua (KNATCOM), Mrs. Ngugi (KICD), Dr. Nzomo (TSC), Dr. Ntarangwi (CUE), Mr. Soo (Kenya Delegation))

Ambassador Godia, Chair of the Ed Commission (front row, second left) presents the Education Commission Oral Report to the Plenary of the 39th GC
4.2. THE NATURAL SCIENCE COMMISSION

The Commission approved of the following to preside it. Mr. Mustafa El Tayeb from Sudan was elected as the chairperson and Ms. Elizabeth Silva from Portugal, Mr. Tjama Tjivijua from Namibia. Ms. Alejandra De Bellis from Uruguay, Mr. Chawdhury Mufad Ahmed from Bangladesh as vice chairpersons. The rapporteur was Mr. Slawomir Ratajski of Poland.

The Commission then took note of the reports of the six intergovernmental and international scientific programmes including the IOC. The full reports can be found on the UNESCO website as follows: 39 C/REP/9 (IOC), 39 C/REP/10 (MAB), 39 C/REP/11 (IGGP), 39 C/REP/12 (IHP), 39 C/REP/13 (IHE); 39 C/REP/14 (IBSP). The full report on the MAB strategy for 2015-2025 is 39 C/INF.15.

The following are summaries of the above-mentioned reports:

**Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)**

Since the Commission’s report to the 38th General Conference, endorsed by the 28th session of IOC Assembly in June 2015, two major international frameworks have been officially agreed on. In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the **2030 Agenda** with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 14 dedicated to the ocean. In December 2015, the **Paris Climate Agreement** for the first time had a reference to the ocean. Together with the **SAMOA (SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action) Pathway** established in September 2014 and the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** of March 2015, these
frameworks provide a comprehensive set of international goals and commitments encouraging countries to work individually and collectively towards achieving them.

The fact that ocean is included in the above major frameworks is the positive outcome of the unrelenting efforts by IOC and its partners. The recognition of its role as a custodian for targets 10.3 and 10.a of SDG 14, makes the IOC of UNESCO one of only four (along with WTO, ILO and UNFCCC) United Nations agencies/conventions that are explicitly referenced in the SDG targets. With this recognition comes responsibility to deliver, not only as a Secretariat but more importantly as a global community, through its Member States.

Ocean science is becoming critically important for our civilization. The ten targets of SDG 14 illustrate this clearly. Curbing pollution and stopping unsustainable fishery practices requires management decisions and investments underpinned by political will. On the other side, some targets, such as the one on ocean acidification or science-based management of coastal and marine ecosystems, require very strong input from science, including climate science. The ocean ecosystem science needs to progress faster to be able to fully respond to the demands of SDG 14. There are some other unresolved and very difficult issues of ocean (and climate) science. Such challenges call for a dedicated intergovernmental United Nations organization, such as IOC of UNESCO, to guide the development of ocean observations, science, services and related capacity development and to direct their products towards serving the society and ensuring healthy environment.

At its 49th session, the IOC Executive Council encouraged the IOC Officers and Executive Secretary to pursue the development of the concept of an International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) – Towards the ocean we need for the future we want. This decade on the ocean is set to be adopted by the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)

During the period of 2016-2017, the MAB ICC held its 28th and 29th sessions. The report informs on the most important developments of the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) since 38th UNESCO General Conference.

The report concludes that despite the prevailing constraints in terms of human and financial resources, the MAB Programme and its WNBR remain highly relevant to Member States in their effort to pursue the SDGs and continue to attract external resources. It notes that the special roles of MAB and the WNBR in the new global processes for sustainable development must be further promoted and supported in future work plans of UNESCO.

International Global Geoparks (IGGP)

This report has been prepared by the two statutory Councils within the IGGP who inform on the progress of this Programme during the past biennium. It focuses on science research by IGCP and on the science outreach by the UNESCO Global Geoparks.

During the biennium, UNESCO’s Earth science activities have achieved significant results. UNESCO and its partners in the IGCP supported 42 projects and 51 project meetings. Scientists from 116 countries and 3,500 participants across the world were active in these projects, an
impressive level of international cooperation for one of UNESCO’s programmes. Since 2014, the level of women scientists involved in IGCP has risen from 26% to 38% and, among project participants less than 35 years old, 52% of all scientists are women.

IGCP projects delivered over 500 publications in peer-reviewed journals. A policy document on the incorporation of artisanal and small-scale mining component in the training of small-scale engineers and technicians in Africa has been published. UNESCO contributed to the training of young geologists and mining engineers in developing countries to improve ownership of natural resources, particularly in Africa.

Following the official launch of the UNESCO Global Geopark designation, national and regional workshops have been organized in Asia, Africa, Arab states, Europe, and Latin America with the support of UNESCO. This is not only a result of the efficient cooperation between UNESCO and the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), but due to the great outreach work done by the UNESCO field offices which has brought new countries and regions into the network. By the end of the biennium, 15 new candidates will be evaluated and 35 existing sites revalidated to be discussed during the second Council meeting in China in September 2017.

**International Hydrological Programme (IHP)**

The IHP is currently midway in its eighth implementation phase (IHP-VIII, 2014-2021) *Water security: Responses to local, regional and global challenges*, which is aligned with the 37 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy of UNESCO (2014-2021) and serves Strategic Objective 5: “Promoting international scientific cooperation on critical challenges to sustainable development”.

The reports also informs of the 22nd Session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council in June 2016 in Paris and the election of a new chairperson as well as 5 vice chairpersons. It briefly explains achievements in the following six themes: water-related disasters and hydrological change, groundwater in a changing environment, water scarcity and quality, water and human settlements for the future, ecohydrology, engineering harmony for a sustainable world and water education which are part of Main Line of Action 6: *Strengthening Freshwater Security* that consists the bulk of IHP work.

**UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education**

This report by the UNESCO-IHE Governing Board provides an overview of the activities of the Institute in 2016. It outlines UNESCO-IHE’s priorities, objectives and accomplishments within its three main programme areas: education, research and capacity development, before it ceased to be a UNESCO category 1 institute.

UNESCO-IHE was funded entirely on extra-budgetary contributions, amounting to 41,348,500 Euros in 2016. The main sources of income were approximately 40% through externally awarded projects, 25% from the base subsidy from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands and 35% from students’ tuition fees.

The 39th UNESCO General Conference approved UNESCO-IHE to function henceforth as a Category to Institute.
International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP)

The report informs the 39th General Conference of the principal IBSP activities during the 2016-2017 biennium and the outcomes of the statutory meetings during the biennium of the IBSP Scientific Board, which call for a new focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for sustainable development especially in Africa.

During the 2016-2017 biennium, IBSP was able to implement several major priority actions: the establishment of three new category 2 centres, one network of excellence (the African Crystallography Association), the development of Africa Science Weeks, and the conclusion of the International Year of Light with activities implemented in 148 countries all around the world.

Despite financial and human resource limitations, IBSP has continued UNESCO’s longstanding and internationally recognized work in the basic sciences, unique in the United Nations system. It has produced remarkable results in capacity building, especially in Africa, and has achieved visibility for UNESCO at a global scale, with the International Years. Still, IBSP’s potential for bringing about unprecedented opportunities to meet human needs and respond to developmental challenges has not been fully explored. The basic sciences underpin solutions to global economic, social and environmental challenges. The value of the IBSP and its role towards achieving the SDGs deserve proper recognition by the Member States.

The Science Commission then went on to examine seven agenda items as follows:

Item 4.5 Conclusions of the Youth Forum “youth engaging with UNESCO”

On 25th and 26th October a 60 young men and men from all regions of the world met were invited to take part in the UNESCO youth forum entitled ‘Rethinking Youth Engagement with UNESCO’. Two of them made a presentation the sciences Commission and requested that UNESCO co-develop a toolbox to enable citizen science and youth-collected data and research.

In it’s intervention under this item Kenya reported that it has fully embraced UNESCO’s operational strategy on youth and now has a functional and vibrant UNESCO Youth Forum. It thanked UNESCO Secretariat for enabling Kenya to customize the UNESCO operational strategy on youth and in the subsequent development of the Kenya UNESCO Youth Forum strategic plan. This strategic plan has already been implemented and the youth hope to use it to address challenges Kenya faces in skills development, policy review and civic engagement. Kenya therefore concurred on the need to engage the youth in a more meaningful way. Kenya supports UNESCO in its current strategy on engagement with young people and on the need for youth to play a leading role in the achievement of SDGs.

Consideration and adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021, Part II.A: Major Programme II – Natural Sciences 9 (and IOC)

For the financial period 2018-2019 the integrated budget framework is $1,224,746,700 including all sources of funds. The Natural Sciences programme will be allocated $172,766,100 of which $54,775,200 will be allocated to the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP). The allocation for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is $38,181,600. The General Conference also authorized the Director-General to provide support
Kenya and Ghana presented a draft resolution on the setting up of a trust fund for sustainable financing of the African Biosphere Reserves Network, (AfriBioFund) with the support of Cuba, Hungary, Russian Federation and Zimbabwe, on behalf of Members States of Electoral Group V.a. (African States). After examining the it the Commission recommended its adoption to the General Conference.

**Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission IOC**

Mr. Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) gave a presentation of the IOC within the Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (Draft 39 C/5). He noted that oceans had been specifically addressed in Sustainable Development Goal N° 14 namely “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”.

The IOC will contribute to SDG 14, notably in the areas of capacity building, ocean observations, finding new solutions to issues such as ocean acidification and management tools for oceans. He also emphasized IOC’s important work in climate change notably in mapping of ocean biodiversity and its regional tsunami warning systems.

For the first time, there was a separate session devoted to the IOC, consistent with the fact that the Commission now has a stand-alone chapter in the C/5 document. Many Member States welcomed this new development as being in accordance with the IOC’s status within the Organization.

Several delegates emphasized the importance of IOC and the necessity to continue to prioritize IOC in future programmes and budgets. In particular, they highlighted the importance of tsunami warning systems and capacity building in the ocean sciences.

Various delegates underscored the important work UNESCO was undertaking in the area of climate change, including through IOC, and in the area of disaster risk reduction.

Kenya appreciated the role of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) as an important platform for the promotion, development and coordination of marine scientific research. We view this as critical in the achievement of SDG 14 on the Ocean and related SDGs.

Kenya welcomed the new presentation of the IOC as a stand-alone chapter of the 39 C/5 and noted the critical function of capacity development in IOC’s mandate. It highlighted the need to build a critical mass of marine science professionals especially in Africa noting that the IOC Sub-commissions are key to the promotion of IOC programmes at the national, regional and international levels. To this end, Kenya appreciated the contribution of the IOC Sub-Commission for Africa and Adjacent Island States in Nairobi, Kenya and its role in supporting and strengthening interregional collaboration and sharing of good practices.

Kenya further highlighted the need to build a robust communication strategy for a stronger outreach and visibility and urged UNESCO continue raising awareness and illustrating how the IOC is relevant for the citizens of UNESCO’s Member States. To this end, the Global Ocean
Sciences report should be fully utilized to support empowerment of societies as well contributing to informed policy-making.

Kenya also appreciated the role played by the Ocean Teacher Global Academy and its contribution to sustainable management of the ocean and coastal areas and noted that the designation of the Kenya Marine and fisheries Institute as a regional training centre for the Ocean Teacher Global Academy will contribute to efforts to strengthen capacity in the region.

Kenya further stressed the need to continue reaching out to the young scientists and youth in general noting that fostering youth engagement and participation is critical to the design and implementation of solutions that will foster sustainable development.

Kenya also welcomed efforts to strengthen collaborations with the United Nations Agencies and partners and urged the IOC Secretariat to continue expanding strategic partnerships for better programme delivery.

 Establishment of category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO in the area of Natural Sciences (39 C/18 Parts II, III, IV, V, VIII).

The Commission recommended to the General Conference that it adopt seven Category II centres as follows:

1. Regional Centre on water security (CERSHI) in Mexico
2. Institute of Water Education (IHE-Delft), in Netherlands
3. Junior Academy of Sciences in Ukraine
4. Institute of Mathematical Sciences in Ghana
5. International Competence Centre for Mining-Engineering Education in the Russian Federation
6. International Centre for Health-Related Basic Sciences and Human Nutrition in Iran
7. International Training Centre on Operational Oceanography within the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) in India.

 UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change.

The Commission recommended the General Conference to adopt this item and expressed appreciation to the Director General for the updated UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change for the 2018-2021 period that is in consonance with the Common Core Principles of a United Nations System-wide Approach to Climate Action.

Kenya informed that like many other African countries are, it is already experiencing frequent droughts, erratic rainfall pattern, heat waves and flooding, due to climate change. It noted that the impact of climate on food security, water security and quality, inter-communal relations and rural-urban migration is already significant in some Member States. It urged
UNESCO to strengthen its multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary approach to support Member States mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Kenya noted the appropriateness and timeliness of UNESCO’s climate change education initiative given that the bulk of the country’s population is made up of young people. Kenya also lauded the proposal to blend scientific and indigenous knowledge to understand climate change as this will create synergies to better support efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change.

South Africa noted that biomes and ecosystems are equally important and should be given equal attention and urged more support to national monitoring committees.

Germany observed that SIDs and LDCs are the best positioned to explain the adverse effects at climate change. Urged UNESCO presence in COP 23 in Bonn which will be chaired by Fiji. It stressed the need to use biosphere and geoparks as pioneers for climate change action.

Bangladesh pointed out that it is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world being the third most populated in the world but 93rd in terms of the surface area it occupied. It noted that climate change is very visible in Bangladesh and reported that at the time of speaking the country was suffering sudden floods in the middle of a harvest season.

Cote d’Ivoire pointed out that Africa may pay a high price if climate change is not mitigated.

Brazil highlighted the need for coordination between UNESCO and other bodies so as to avoid duplication of efforts.

Uganda recognised the need to mainstream action on climate change, it reported that in Uganda climate change manifests itself with changing patterns of rainy seasons and the rapidly receding glacier on the mountains of Ruwenzori. It pointed out that it has drawn a climate change act and is collaborating with various global climate change actors.

UAE reported that it had established a ministry with the mission to keep climate change under control and emphasized the importance of the IOC in mitigating climate change.

Other Member States underlined the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and expressed confidence in the soundness of the UNESCO strategy.

**Proclamation of an International Day of Light (39 C/40)**

The Commission recommended to the General Conference that it adopt this resolution proclaiming 16th May as the International Day of Light. Togo highlighted the light divide in the world today and expressed hope that this date will help to improve the light gap.

Kenya welcomed the proposal to proclaim an International Day of Light noting that light and light-based industries cut across science disciplines which will give impetus to STEM education and provide momentum to already existing activities in promoting gender inclusive science education. Kenya pointed out that light-based technologies such as solar light conversion and energy storage are important for countries to meet their international obligations of the Paris Climate Agreement.
Finland pointed out that the year of light in 2015 already highlighted the benefits of light adding that for Finns 16th May is a perfect date as it is the time of the year when the light hardly goes down in their country, to them there cannot be a better time for appointing a day of light.

Other Member States recognised the date is important as on 16th May 1960 laser light came on for the first time and the discovery of laser marked revolution in the field of light and light technologies.

In her intervention, the ADG Science, Ms. Flavia Schlegel, noted that all the Member States that had spoken were in favour of the International Day of Light. She took note of remarks made by Togo on the need to raise awareness on the poverty of light and to find solutions to fight the light divide.

The International Day of Light is administered from the International Basic Science Programme (IBSP) of UNESCO by a Steering Committee that includes representatives from UNESCO as well as the American Institute of Physics (AIP), the American Physical Society (APS), the European Physical Society (EPS), the International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD), the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), the IEEE Photonics society among others.

**International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)**

Kenya noted IOC’s critical function and appreciated the fact that now IOC is in a stand alone chapter. It remarked that it shall fully utilize the global ocean report. Kenya appreciated having been selected to participate in the Ocean teacher global academy, will contribute to efforts towards capacity building in the country.

Belgium informed that it hosts an IOC sub-commission in Oostend, and reminded that a central theme in the strategy is capacity development. Belgium strongly welcomed the preservation of IOC budget despite the difficult financial circumstances and stressed the need to pursue a vigorous effort to get more extra-budgetary resources.

Finland noted that IOC is a central operator in its field of science and pointed out that systematic ocean observation systems are needed around the world. It encouraged countries to share their marine data in the spirit of open sharing.

France urged UNESCO to strive to attain its extra-budgetary target for the IOC and informed that the IOC can rely on the support of the French UNESCO National Commission.

Germany observed that capacity building is a strategic and long-term perspective of the IOC and pledged support for the activities planned in the coming biennium.

Uruguay reiterated its firm commitment to the IOC and congratulated the IOC secretariat for the quality of the work it does.

Qatar stressed on the need to teach about oceans in schools and informed that it had laboratories for the study of ocean dynamics oceanography centre in the university of Qatar.
Turkey recommended Member States to commit money to the IOC and informed that it hosts a centre that provides non-stop service which permits the emission of warning on adverse ocean activity including tsunami in the eastern Mediterranean region.

Portugal emphasized that oceans are a priority, they are highly relevant but highly demanding and noted that it is important to raise extra funds more than ever before due to the difficult financial circumstances facing UNESCO. It informed that it will be host the next meeting on Tsunami warning System for the North-eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean on 21st to 23rd November 2017.

The Holy See expressed its appreciation for UNESCO work in general and in particular in the oceans and informed that it would watch how the ocean decade will develops with interest.

In his address the Science ADG-IOC, Vladimir Ryabinin, said that Canada and Quebec send fantastic interns to the IOC who learn a lot and encouraged other Member States to do the same. He informed that 38% of the workers involved in oceanography are women which is 10% above the average. He thanked Norway for its extra-budgetary contribution noting that such funds all the Member States because it comes with no strings attached. He agreed that oceans need to be managed and highlighted a new activity of ocean literacy to teach ocean science in schools that will be funded by Sweden and the EU.

**Proclamation by the United Nations of 2019 as an International Year of The Periodic Table of Chemical Elements**

Thailand noted that Dmitri Mendeleev, put the chaotic nature of the elements in an orderly manner and his prediction of chemical elements was proven later by physics, it is therefore an ideal example of science at work.

Ghana considering the enormous work of the periodic table in the ordering up of chemical elements and saw the relevance of such a year to bring science to the fore in the world.

Finland remarked that it was happy to support this initiative noting that it would emphasise the unifying nature of the periodic table in the sense of global science, it observed that it is time to celebrate this achievement.

Hungary reminded that Dmitri Mendeleev’s work was a milestone in those days.

Togo and Indonesia suggested that this initiative be treated in such a way that it contributes to the promotion of chemistry and stem education. Togo suggested that the proclamation of 2019 as the International Year of the Periodic Table be associated with one specific initiative such as scientific experiments in schools.

The ADG Science in her remarks informed that the leading role in the celebration of the International Year of the Periodic Table will be by the **International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry** will also be responsible for the fundraising.
4.3. THE SOCIAL HUMAN SCIENCE COMMISSION

The Social and Human Science Commission began its work by electing its Bureau composed of its Chairperson, Mr. Milan Konvit (Slovakia), four Vice-Chairpersons (Turkey, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Malaysia and Namibia) and a Rapporteur (Kuwait).

The Chairperson in his opening speech recalled the enduring relevance of UNESCO’s mandate in the Social and Human Sciences for tackling the plethora of pressing issues that the world currently faces, noting the importance of building responses to global challenges around shared values and beliefs and a universal recognition of mutual dignity and rights. He also noted the added value of UNESCO’s programme in directing reflection upon the intellectual, ethical and normative questions which underpin these challenges, as well as for paving a direction to advance meaningful and impactful action towards their resolution. The Chairperson also spoke of the relevance of the Social and Human Sciences programmes to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda in favor of the most disadvantaged women and men, girls and boys.

The SHS Commission adopted its agenda and examined the following items:

Conclusion of the Youth Forum

On 25 and 26 October 2017, 60 young women and men from all regions of the world, who are leading ground-breaking change in their countries and communities related to a UNESCO field of competence met at the 10th UNESCO Youth Forum.

The Forum, entitled “Rethinking Youth Engagement with UNESCO”, provided the opportunity for exchange and the development of recommendations on how to improve engagement between UNESCO and youth to address some of the world’s biggest challenges, including through the development of regional youth spaces.

Key constraints identified included limited access to information, lack of spaces for dialogue, lack of sustainability in youth engagement, difficulty for youth-led initiatives and genuine partnership, lack of need-based approaches, inadequate timing and design of the Youth Forum.

Some of the recommendations stemming from the youth forum include the need for:

1. UNESCO to consolidate information on its existing resources, programmes, strategies, networks, etc. of relevance to youth.

2. Youth to be engaged in planning and informing the subsequent Youth Fora to ensure they remain relevant and engaging.

3. Reconsider the timing and design of the UNESCO Youth Forum. The UNESCO Youth Forum to be hosted well in advance of the UNESCO General Conference in order to allow youth to develop a coalition of support of the recommendations they make during the Forum.
4. Building youth leadership into designing the programmatic approach of the Youth Forum. The youth participants should collaborate with UNESCO in assessing the needs of youth organizations and youth working in the thematic areas of the Organization.

The Social and Human Sciences Commission approved the conclusions of the 10th UNESCO Youth Forum and emphasized the importance of a more inclusive role for young people in the decision-making process and in the implementation in the field of the Youth Forum’s recommendations.

Delegates also supported a proposal to place an emphasis on the systematic inclusion of youth as participants in UNESCO’s meetings and events.

Kenya commended UNESCO in its work in the youth sector and noted that Kenya has fully embraced UNESCO’s operational strategy on youth and has a functional and vibrant UNESCO Youth Forum.

Kenya also appreciated UNESCO’s support to customize the UNESCO operational strategy and subsequent development of the Kenya UNESCO Youth Forum strategic plan. This strategic plan is already being implemented.

Kenya highlighted that it is very important that the youth must engage with UNESCO in a more meaningful way and that the greatest challenge facing the youth in the world today is unemployment. The Government of Kenya continues to design programmes that are youth focused. For example, through the National Youth service (NYS), the government continues to provide skills and training to the youth to empower them. Through the Youth Enterprise Development Fund the government continues to provide funds to enable young people to start businesses.

**Consideration and adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021**

Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, introduced 39 C/5 and presented the work undertaken by the UNESCO Secretariat to better match the Social and Human Sciences programmes with national priorities, increase cooperation between programme sectors and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Member States, including Kenya, recalled the importance and relevance of the social and human sciences, particularly in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The need to address the different challenges related to social inclusion, migration crises, discrimination, the rise in violence and intolerance was underscored as important areas under UNESCO’s field of competence.

Delegates called for the enhanced status and strengthening of Social and Human Sciences Programme to enable it to better contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to respond more efficiently to the various challenges.

Emphasis was also placed on the importance of an intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach to address new challenges, and took note of the guidance provided in order to
strengthen the role of social and human sciences in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Kenya supported youth mainstreaming model in addressing issues affecting the youth and institutionalization of youth development agenda.

Kenya also welcomed the implementation of the strategic objective of supporting inclusive social development fostering intercultural dialogue and the promotion of ethical principles.

Kenya highlighted that science and technology provides the essential means for facilitating social transformation. The success of all national development policies depend on the extent of integration of modern science and technology. Intersectoral collaboration between the social and natural sciences sectors should therefore be strengthened.

Kenya also underscored that sport is a valuable tool for fostering social cohesion through the promotion of values such as inclusion, respect, tolerance and solidarity. Kenya welcomes UNESCO’s role in supporting Member States harness the transformative power of sports especially through the development of relevant policies and school curricula.

The SHS Commission also took note of the reports of the work undertaken by the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), the MOST Programme, the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS) and the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST).

**Challenges and Responsibilities for a Planet in Transition: World Humanities Conference**

Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, informed the SHS Commission on the main outcomes of the World Humanities Conference (WHC) which was jointly organized by UNESCO, through the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, and by the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), in partnership with the Foundation for the World Humanities Conference. The Conference took place in Liège, Belgium, from 6 to 11 August 2017.

Six main themes, representing major dimensions of the challenges posed by a planet in transition were discussed namely: humans and the environment; cultural identities and diversities; migrations and borders; cultural heritage; history, memory and politics; and new settings and contexts for humanities research.

It was noted that the capacity of the humanities to engage substantive long-term reflection is indispensable to our societies in steering the environmental, technological, and cultural dynamics that are transforming them. In order to achieve these objectives, the specific value of the WHC was to ensure the inclusiveness and diversity of a conversation designed to underpin the development of a new global agenda for the humanities.

The need to foster disciplinary research, along with interdisciplinary collaboration with other domains of science and humanities research and human reflection, as well as with the arts, the letters and non-academic knowledge, while also collaborating in conceiving new ways of teaching the humanities in general education and for life-long learning was highlighted.
The SHS Commission also highlighted the need to:

- Improve the participation of young scholars in all humanities research activities;
- Recognize the irreplaceable capacity of the humanities in helping contemporary societies to meet critical challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Join and contribute to UNESCO and CIPSH initiatives to follow up on the World Humanities Conference, especially by enhanced collaboration through the establishment of new regional and global humanities networks, starting with Africa and its diaspora.

Kenya noted the role of humanities in development and the critical role played by humanities in resolving the challenges that afflict humanity. Kenya also commended UNESCO for upholding its long standing commitment to intellectual cooperation and solidarity. Kenya also acknowledges the importance of the contributions of the humanities to the realization of 2030 Agenda.

Kenya also highlighted the importance of partnerships and interdisciplinary approaches in research for policy as well as the importance of establishing a framework of a research agenda for the humanities and the development of a funding mechanism. In this regard, Kenya has put a lot of importance on the teaching of humanities at school level and at the universities.

**Establishment of Category 2 Centres under the Auspices of UNESCO**

The SHS Commission adopted without debate two proposals on the establishment of two category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO, the “International Centre for Rapprochement of Cultures” in Almaty, Kazakhstan and the “International Centre for the promotion of Human Rights in Local and Regional Levels” in Graz, Austria.

**Follow-Up of the Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI)**

The Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences expressed her gratitude to the Russian Federation for the excellent organization of the conference and its commitment to further support the implementation of the Kazan Action Plan.

She highlighted that the Action Plan marks a significant breakthrough, articulating a shift away from mere declarations of policy intent towards measurable action, as well as strengthening the alignment between sport policy development and the 2030 Agenda.

She also underlined the Plan’s focus on inclusive participation in grassroots sport, including traditional games and sport, and announced that a road map for the implementation of the Kazan Action Plan will be finalized by CIGEPS at its 2018 session.

The representative of the Russian Federation noted that the outcome document of MINEPS VI, the Kazan Action Plan, is the product of extensive consultations and stressed the need for Member States, UNESCO and, in particular, the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical
Education and Sport (CIGEPS) to further strengthen their efforts to foster the implementation of the Plan.

MINEPS VI marked a significant shift from declarations of policy intent and focused more on measurable action. It took stock of developments in sport and strategic issues in sports policy. The International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, the Declaration of Berlin, and the UN Agenda 2030 were guiding documents and great reference documents of the conference.

While several delegates highlighted the relevance of the Plan to their national sport policy, others expressed the need for Member States to be assisted in building sport policy capacities. In this regard, the particular requirements of African Member States to be supported in the follow-up to MINEPS VI was highlighted.

The representative of the Director-General noted that capacity-building projects on sport policy are already under way in some Member States, and invited delegates to solicit the Secretariat with related requests. She mentioned that the Secretariat is exploring with the African Union the opportunity of organizing a regional meeting devoted to the Kazan Action Plan. She also highlighted that Action Plan focuses on women and girls, and on gender equality as one of UNESCO global priorities, and explained that other groups are addressed throughout other parts of the Plan.

The SHS Commission adopted the resolution that highlights that quality physical education and inclusive access to sport and physical activity constitute important prerequisites for individual and social development, an essential component of education, a major socio-economic driver, and a bridge to foster peace and understanding between people.

The resolution also endorses the sport policy follow-up framework presented in the Kazan Action Plan as a voluntary tool for stimulating and assessing progress in the implementation of national and international policy in the fields of physical education, physical activity and sport.

**Cooperation of UNESCO with the International Township of Auroville, India**

India introduced the item, followed by the representative of the Director-General who recalled the long history of cooperation between UNESCO and Auroville.

The foundation of the international township of Auroville in South India on February 28, 1968, when the youth of 124 Member States participated in the ceremony by depositing the soil of their countries in the foundation urn to symbolize the coming together of the nations of the world was recalled.

It was also noted that the General Conference of UNESCO unanimously adopted resolutions of support to Auroville in 1966, 1968, 1970 and 1983, inviting Member States and international non-governmental organizations to participate in the development of Auroville as an international cultural township designed to bring together the values of different cultures and civilizations in harmonious environment with integrated living standards which correspond to man’s physical and spiritual needs.
The Commission adopted, without debate, the resolution which invites the Director-General to reinforce the association of UNESCO with Auroville and organize commemorative activities for its 50th anniversary and to re-invite the Member States on the special occasion of Auroville’s 50th anniversary, to participate in Auroville’s further development.

**Revision of the Statutes of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Intergovernmental Council**

Her Excellency, Dato’ Sri Rohani Abdul Karim, Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia, in her capacity as the President of the Intergovernmental Council of MOST, took the floor and expressed warm thanks to the Intergovernmental Council and Bureau for having adopted the proposed revisions during the 13th session hosted by the Government of Malaysia on 16 and 17 March 2017.

The SHS Commission examined the item without debate, and adopted revised Statutes of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme.

**Draft Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change**

A majority of the speakers underlined the importance of this declaration, and expressed confidence that its adoption would help reinforce practical activities in the areas of education, capacity-building and public awareness-raising aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Several representatives of Small Island Developing States underlined its importance for reinforcing international cooperation to assist their citizens in the specific context of vulnerability. Several speakers underlined the need for measures to ensure the implementation of the declaration, including translation into national languages. Many highlighted special measures with regard to gender equality and the role of women.

Many representatives appreciated that the draft declaration stressed that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted under the Convention were the primary multilateral fora in the global effort for responding to climate change, and there could be no reinterpretation.

Kenya informed that the threats caused by climate change led to the launched Kenya’s National Climate Change Action Plan in 2013. The plan addresses the enabling aspects of finance, policy and legislation, knowledge management, capacity development, technology requirement and monitoring and reporting.

Kenya also recognizes that climate change is a cross cutting sustainable development issue with economic, social and environmental impact in its Kenya National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2015 – 2030.

The Commission adopted the Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change.

The Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference at its 18th session on 20 November 1974, recognizes the growing value of science and technology for tackling various world problems. It sets international standards for a wide range of issues, which concern the relationships between ethics and science for society.

The Recommendation promotes a fair and appropriate status of scientific researchers and informs relevant national science, technology and innovation policies, which encourage and assist the capacity of scientific researchers to perform research and experimental development in an enhanced spirit of responsibility towards man and his environment and which ensure that societies use knowledge from all scientific fields in a responsible manner.

The report examined by the General Conference, presented the results of the 2nd Consultation of Member States on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation (covering the period 2013-2016) and informed the General Conference about the monitoring process and its outcomes in the context of the parallel revision of the 1974 Recommendation.

The SHS Commission examined, without debate and adopted without debate the consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers.

Revision of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers

The General Conference of UNESCO decided at its 37th session in November 2013 that the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers should be revised to reflect the contemporary ethical and regulatory challenges relating to the governance of science and science-society relationship.

The representative of the Director-General introduced the item, thanking Member States for showing great interest in supporting scientists. A majority of the speakers appreciated the inclusiveness of the process and said that the text is comprehensive and reflects major contributions made during the consultations. Kenya commended UNESCO for the various efforts and initiatives to revise the recommendation through a consultative process in which Kenya participated.

Many explained that their contributions during the consultations resulted from extensive consultations within their communities of science institutions in their own States, and some added that having consultations in several rounds allowed them time to contribute.

Kenya commended UNESCO for the various efforts and initiatives to revise this recommendation since the last biennium. Kenya participated and submitted her proposals for inclusion in the revised recommendations during the 1st and 2nd round consultations aimed at revising this recommendation.

Kenya committed in her intervention to take necessary steps to include the revised recommendation in legislation and policies and supported the revision as it was based on views received from a majority of member states. This was in recognition that the
recommendation would shape the role of research in the modern world and social transformation of the planet. Kenya observed that it was paramount that the revised recommendation be based on the current changing social and technological environment.


4.4. THE CULTURE COMMISSION

The Culture Commission of the 39th General Conference was held from Wednesday 8 November 2017 – Thursday 9 November 2017 at Fontenoy, UNESCO Headquarters. The Commission was chaired by H.E. Mrs. Vincenza Lomonaco, Ambassador/ Permanent Delegate of the Permanent Delegation of Italy to UNESCO. The elected Vice Chairpersons were Ms. Venera Domi (Albania), Mr. David Osorio (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Mr. Vigilio Almario (Philippines) and Mr. Collins Chipote (Zambia), and Mr. Mounir Anastase (Palestine) as Rapporteur.

The Kenya Delegation was led by H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO. The representatives from Kenya at the Commission were Mr. John Moogi Omare, the Director for Culture, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, and Ms. Christine M’Kwenda and Ms. Akuorkor Plahar from the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO.

The Commission Agenda covered debates on the following main items:

Conclusions of the Youth Forum on Rethinking and Enhancing Youth Engagement with UNESCO

Ms. Nadia Owusu and Mr. Leonardo Parraga, of the 10th Annual Youth Forum held in UNESCO, presented the Youth Forum conclusions pertaining to Culture. The conclusions centred on the questions - (i) How can we make each and every young person a more effective cultural ambassador as a mechanism to catalyse socio-economic development that is respectful of cultural diversity? (ii) How can youth populations be more involved and catalysed in safeguarding, transmitting cultural heritage both tangible and intangible?, and encourage UNESCO to engage the youth within the Culture Sector as follows:

- endorse a “UNESCO’s youth” network of young people to support the mandate of the organization (e.g. young leaders for UNESCO, youth cultural ambassadors)
- connect with the youth by creating links between youth organizations in common areas of work, connecting with funders, pitching competitions for cultural goals
- provide a seat at the table in the different committees, consultations and meetings so that the youth can contribute to decisions
- increase the capacity of National Commissions for UNESCO to better help those interested in cultural heritage
- ensure youth have access to reliable, direct communication with UNESCO
- UNESCO should use its reach to catalyse ideas and projects led by youth in the field of cultural heritage (e.g. supporting a #makeheritagecool campaign, led by youth)

The Youth Forum delegates then presented two questions to the members of the Culture Commission: “How do Member States mobilise youth participation around Culture?” “What are the good practices for cooperation?”

Members States shared on best practices for engaging and encouraging youth participation within the field of culture in their countries. The Kenya intervention made by H. E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Kenya to UNESCO, underscored the role of the youth as actors and partners under the programme Heritage in Young Hands in activities aimed at the appreciation, safeguarding and conservation of Culture and Heritage. H.E. Prof. Godia emphasised the role of cultural festivals in Kenya, as platforms for showcasing and celebrating the rich and diverse cultural expressions of communities, underlining their purpose in community life cycles, as a medium through which cultural traditions and practices are enjoyed and transmitted, and avenues for the promotion of cultural and artistic rights are created. The Ambassador also underscored the role of annual Kenya school drama and music festivals as unique opportunities to nurture and develop the talents and creativity for youth within the education system. In conclusion, he emphasised the Kenya Culture programme, and its intrinsic property as a vector for empowering local ownership of cultural development, thus providing opportunities for young people to contribute to sustainable development through creativity, innovations and job opportunities.

Twenty other Commission members took the floor to present their best practices on youth engagement initiatives and the central role of the youth in the field of culture for safeguarding and transmitting heritage, dialogue, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. South Sudan underlined the need to ‘listen’ to the youth, and for capacity building to empower them to be ambassadors of cultural heritage protection. Egypt emphasised measures and activities to promote the youth in leadership positions through rigorous training courses, a need to facilitate youth participation in social promotion, and the function of Culture as the bedrock of civilisation. Namibia underscored the need to structure and to strengthen the dialogue between the youth and UNESCO, and on the potential contribution of the Associated Schools Network (ASPNET) to spread UNESCO’s values e.g. the promotion and protection of cultural heritage.

Cambodia shared on the celebration of Culture day in Cambodia, and the Netherlands on the creation of National Youth Councils with competitive elections for various positions. Examples of the Dutch National Youth Councils are the National Youth Councils - for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for the United Nations, for the European Union, and the National Youth Council for UNESCO. Netherlands further shared on the design of school curricula on Culture, and of national and international tours and exhibitions on intangible heritage programmes structured to garner youth reflection on what their own roles are or could be within their own cultures.

The United Kingdom best practice focused on the role played by civil society in mobilising youth engagement in Culture, and in spreading the values of culture and cultural awareness.
Examples included primary schools benefitting from a unique film literacy programme, as well as a community-led young archaeology club programme to engage children in archaeology - a programme implemented with over seventy branches nationwide.

**Barbados** outlined their youth entrepreneurship scheme, and junior curators programme, as well as activities involving digitisation and youth engagement and responsibility for social media on cultural heritage over the summer period. The Barbadian “Heritage Ambassadors” programme for Barbadian children between the ages of 9 to 16 was also highlighted.

Mr Yonas Desta Tsegayethe, the Director-General of the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage of **Ethiopia** (ARCCH), presented on national initiatives with a clear modality to promote young people for senior leadership positions, which he cited himself as a product of. He further expounded on the Ethiopian national revolving fund for the youth and on assistance offered to the youth to develop and promote sustainable indigenous systems and values. Ghana presented on the use of social media and game creation by the youth for cultural purposes, and on initiatives concerning the acquisition of traditional cultural skills through beads making, jewellery, and musical dramas where senior high school students are encouraged to create their own scripts.

All the speakers endorsed the recommendations of the Youth Forum as pertaining to the Culture sector. The Commission took note of the aforementioned conclusions of the Youth Forum and recommended that the General Conference take note of the proposed draft resolution.

**The Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 Part II.A: Major Programme IV – Culture**

Mr Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director-General for Culture, representative of the Director-General presented the Budget Item. He cited the 2030 Agenda, Africa Union 2063 Agenda, new urban Agenda, Samoa pathway, Sendai framework, Culture and emergencies strategy, and Medium term strategy (2014 – 2021) as part of the guiding documents and principles for the Budget. The Budget for Major Programme IV-Culture for the period 2018-2019 targets Strategic objective – **SO 7**: Protecting, promoting and transmitting heritage, with Main Line of Action- **MLA 1**: Protecting, conserving, promoting and transmitting culture and heritage for dialogue and development, and **SO 8** on fostering creativity and the diversity of cultural expressions, with **MLA 2**: Fostering Creativity and the diversity of cultural expressions.

Innovative elements include two cross-cutting expected results on emergencies: **ER 5**: *Rapid response mechanism, implement approved culture and emergencies strategy and action plan, impulse more integrated and coordinated responses through the Conventions* (idea of not limiting strategy to conflict but also include natural disasters); and **ER 8**: *culture integrated into polices and measures at the national and local levels by Member States for their effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, so as to curb one of the weaknesses of policy at the international level such as the lack of sufficient data to prove the importance of culture in development.

**Identified areas of intersectoral cooperation** with the **Education sector** regard the appreciation of cultural diversity in support of SDG 4; with the **Communication Information sector** concerns the appreciation of artistic freedom and the promotion of media diversity; with the **Science sector**, the strengthening of the sustainable management of multiple
UNESCO designated sites in support of SDGs 13, 14 and 15, and for a sustainable urban development in support of SDG 11. The proposals of document 39 C/5 in this regard were welcomed.

A **table of comparison the World Heritage Fund** was presented presenting that in **1996** there were 505 sites listed, a fund of 3.5million dollars and an average amount of 6900 per site, whereas in **2016** there are 1031 sites, a fund of 2.9million dollars and an average amount of 2,800 dollars per site. In view of resource mobilization and optimization of resources, two procedures have been undertaken by the Secretariat. The first, an online consultation survey on a voluntary annual fee by the World Heritage properties to which 63 Member States responded and 130 States Parties did not respond. The Centre envisages a re-launch with extended deadlines so as to receive a higher rate of feedback than in the previous survey. The second procedure was a comparative mapping study of forms and models for use of Advisory Services by International Instruments and Programmes.

The Secretariat also presented a **Roadmap for the Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund**. The Roadmap presents the **Short-term** (up to 3 years), **Mid-term** (4 – 8 years) and **Long term** (over 8 years) strategies for two main elements: (i) to increase funds and funding resources, (ii) to Re-calibrate current resources, functions and procedures.

- **Examples of the strategies for (i) Increase of funds and funding resources:**

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<th>SHORT-TERM</th>
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<tr>
<td>Holding of Side-events during committee sessions.</td>
<td>Launch of Forum of Partners.</td>
<td>Possible Optional Protocol to raise the current 1% ceiling for assessed contributions to the World Heritage Fund.</td>
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<td>Continuation of voluntary fundraising measures, voluntary annual fees from some World Heritage properties.</td>
<td>Feasibility of Optional Protocol submitted to General Conference for decision.</td>
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<td>Links on listed properties’ websites for donations to the Fund.</td>
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<td>Support for increasing capacities of the World Heritage Centre.</td>
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<td>Enhanced engagement of Category 2 Centres, field offices and local actors.</td>
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<td>Informal core group on resource mobilization.</td>
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Examples of the strategies for (ii) Re-calibrate current resources, functions and procedures:

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<td>• Prioritization of conservation through action plans for sites on Danger List and those in need.</td>
<td>• Assessment of the implementation of paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines.</td>
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<td>• Analysis of the mapping study of advisory services implications</td>
<td>• Consideration of setting quota/percentage for conservation activities.</td>
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Presentation of the Marketplace for World Heritage

A portal allowing for the funding of specific World Heritage properties and activities in need, the Marketplace ([http://whc.unesco.org/en/marketplace/](http://whc.unesco.org/en/marketplace/)) is the new funding initiative of the World Heritage Centre. There are four Focus Areas: Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDs), Global Projects, Youth and Heritage, Heritage in Danger, and a myriad of communication tools including flyers, bookmarks, UNESCO and World Heritage Websites, UNESCO Social Media Networks, and the hashtag campaign #Give2WorldHeritage.

The Marketplace communicates on the benefits to funding World Heritage Properties e.g. to respond to real urgent needs in the implementation of programmes, contributing to the achievements of the SDGs, and Donor Visibility as Donors are promoted on UNESCO Websites and on its Social Media channels.

The Commission was informed that 20 projects were currently listed by the World Heritage Centre on the Marketplace. Project examples are: Mitigating the threats to Rock Art Heritage in Zimbabwe (70,000 USD), Management of World Heritage Sites in Armenia (50,000 USD), Involving communities and indigenous people in the management of the Pre-Columbian Chieftain Settlements in Costa Rica (1000,000 USD), Building a Global Network of World Heritage Site Managers (250,000 USD), Rapid Response Facility (RRF) Protecting natural World Heritage sites in times of crisis (180,000 USD).

Commission members appreciated the Secretariat’s approach to encourage countries and other parties to support and complement the Budget of the Culture Programme through
extrabudgetary funding and asked for a Progress report at the 42nd Session of the World Heritage Committee.

Examination of Statement of Account

Under the draft resolution concerning the examination of the statement of account, the Commission included amendments strongly reminding States Parties of their obligation to make compulsory contributions and as such reiterated the plea of the World Heritage Committee to pay annual contributions by January 31 to facilitate the timely implementation of the activities financed by the Fund. Commission members also expressed concern at the financial difficulties that the Fund is facing and recalled that the payment of assessed compulsory and voluntary contributions is per Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention a legal obligation incumbent on all States Parties that have ratified the Convention.

Further concerns expressed by Commission members regarded the excessive importance given to the lists of the 1972 (World Heritage) and 2003 (Intangible Cultural Heritage) Conventions, as well as the lack of financial and human resources, particularly for the field offices and for certain conventions. Members also underlined the existing financial dichotomy whereby programmes not considered as “crucial” (e.g. creative cities) were well-funded, and yet programmes considered by Member States to be of “high” importance (e.g. the 1972 Convention) were not sufficiently funded. Mr. Bandarin further informed that the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, considered to be high in priority by Member States was not receiving any funding from Member States. He added that the situation merits discussions on the best way to implement the programmes over the next years.

Jamaica and the Philippines proposed to adopt the roadmap for the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund that integrates the set of complimentary short-, medium- and long-term actions to be implemented in a phased timeline.

The Commission noted the endorsement by the 39 General Conference of the recommendations of the working group on the governance, procedures and working methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO. The Commission called upon the Committee to entrust the ad-hoc working group with the follow-up on the progress in the implementation of the recommendations for the working group of governance, and for the Committee to consider broadening the composition of the ad hoc working group and to envisage opening meetings to all States Parties.

The Commission recommended that the General Conference approve the budget prevision of $118, 173, 700 for the period 2018 – 2019, in the understanding that this amount is subject to adjustment in the light of the decision taken by the General Conference on the budget ceiling and by the joint meeting of the programme commissions.

Mr. John Moogi Omare, Director of Culture, Kenya National Commission to UNESCO presented Kenya’s intervention regarding the Budget item. He underscored Kenya’s support for the Main Lines of Action under Major Programme IV on Culture, and for the continuing focus on supporting Member States to implement the culture conventions as platforms for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Concerning the fostering of creativity and of the diversity of cultural expressions, Mr. Omare highlighted the
positive impacts of the 2005 Convention in Kenya, notably the Convention’s contribution to enhancing the creation of national policies to promote and protect the diversity of cultural expressions at the national level, through policies and measures that strengthen the means to enhance the creation, production, dissemination, distribution, enjoyment of culture and access to cultural activities, goods and services. Kenya also welcomed UNESCO’s support to Member States in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage notably through capacity building and policy advice, and shared that the 2003 Convention has been translated into Kiswahili, hence allowing for a wider dissemination of information and greater participation in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Kenya welcomed the emphasis and design of the Culture Programme to contribute to the wider SDGs of eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities and called on UNESCO to continue its efforts in the priority given to supporting African countries to build national professional capacities, and strengthen institutional and legal frameworks in the cultural and natural heritage and creative industries through the Conventions.

**World Heritage and Sustainable Development**

The Resolution adopted by the Commission on this item, calls upon States Parties in their pursuit in the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda, to harness mainstreaming the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy (WH-SDP) into their national processes related to World Heritage, in full respect of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage properties. The Resolution also requests the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and Category 2 Centres to pursue the implementation of the WH-SDP, and requests the World Heritage Centre to report on progress to the World Heritage Committee.

**Jerusalem and the Implementation of 38 C/Resolution 52**

The Resolution on Jerusalem invites the Director General to provide a progress report at the 40th Session on the implementation of the UNESCO Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Resolution also expresses gratitude to the Director-General for the progress made in the implementation of conservation, restoration and training activities in the Old City of Jerusalem with regard to:

- The development of an architectural heritage conservation institute in partnership with the Welfare Association, through financial contribution from the European Commission.

- The successful establishment of the Al-Aqsa Centre for the Restoration of Islamic Manuscripts in al-Ashrafiya Madrasa.

- And the refurbishment and revitalization of the Islamic Museum of al-Haram ash-Sharif, through the financial contribution of Saudi Arabia and Norway.

The Resolution further recognizes the concerns raised about Israeli archaeological excavations and works in the “Old City and on both sides of the walls” of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, and invites the Director-General to pursue her efforts with the parties concerned for the safeguarding of the OUV of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Resolution was adopted by the Commission without debate. The Commission recommended that the General Conference adopt without amendment the Resolution as submitted by Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain,
Djibouti, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, for inclusion in the Records of the General Conference.

Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO’ Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict

The item concerned the Strategy for the Reinforcement Of UNESCO’ Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event Of Armed Conflict with an addendum to be made on capacity building initiatives to strengthen the ability of Member states to prevent, mitigate and recover the loss of cultural heritage as a result of disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards. The Addendum incorporates consideration for culture into the Disaster Risk Reduction and humanitarian action with the following priority areas:

- Understanding disaster risk to culture
- Strengthening disaster risk governance of the culture sector to manage disaster risk
- Investing in disaster risk reduction of culture for resilience
- Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and for an adequate and effective recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of culture

The Commission adopted the Addendum concerning emergencies associated with disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards, and in the Decision, called on all Member States to continue supporting the implementation of the Strategy and its Addendum and the related Action Plan, notably through voluntary contributions to the Heritage Emergency Fund and in-kind contributions. The Commission also endorsed the appeal on “Protecting Culture and Promoting Cultural Pluralism: the Key to Lasting Peace” with the aim of raising global awareness on the importance of protecting culture in the event of armed conflicts and from natural disasters as a means to achieve peace and strengthen resilience.

4.5. THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION COMMISSION

The CI Commission began with the election of the Chairperson of the CI Commission and members of the Bureau.

Mr Martin Hadlow (Australia) was elected as the Chair of the CI Commission as recommended by the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee. The following were elected as members of the Bureau:

Vice-Chairpersons: Ms Élaine Ayotte (Canada)
- Mr Atanas Mladenov (Bulgaria)
- Ms Chafica Haddad (Grenada)
The following 8 agenda items were considered and discussed by the CI Commission:

**Consideration and adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5); Part II.A: Major Programme V – Communication and Information**

The representative of the Director-General, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information (ADG/CI) Mr Frank La Rue, outlined the various activities carried out under the Communication and Information (CI) Programme as well as the CI Sector’s contribution and intended role in light of the challenges faced by the world that were quite relevant to CI’s mandate.

The reports on the activities of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and by the Information for All Programme (IFAP) were presented by Ms. Albana Shala, Chair of IPDC and Ms. Chafica Haddad, Chair of the IFAP respectively. They also thanked Member States, donors and UNESCO for supporting their work.

During the ensuing debate, Member States including Kenya took the floor and voiced their support for the draft document 39 C/5 including the two main lines of action under major programme V (CI), noting the importance of the CI programme as it related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Member States highlighted the important role of freedom of expression, media development, access to information and knowledge, the role of ICTs and media, online and off-line and the need to address the digital divide, the role of the IFAP programme in addressing violent extremism and the crucial role of the IPDC programme. Support was also expressed for Internet universality and the ROAM principles, as well as the development of Internet universality indicators.

They commended the Secretariat for its work and called for more attention to be given to media development, media pluralism, media diversity, the themes under Main Line of Action 2, strengthening of the Memory of the World Programme and greater inter-sectoral collaboration within UNESCO and multilateral cooperation with the United Nations.

They welcomed UNESCO’s leadership in strengthening the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and asserted that UNESCO’s work in monitoring the achievement of SDG Target 16.10 was crucial. The World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Report was cited as good example of UNESCO’s work that should be continued.

Concern was expressed over UNESCO’s budgetary situation with a call for member states to meet their financial commitments as well as non-earmarking of extra-budgetary contributions to allow UNESCO to implement the programme.
In his reply, the ADG-CI, Mr Frank La Rue appealed to Member States to consider providing additional voluntary contributions, as more activities could be carried out with additional funding.

The draft decision was adopted.

**Establishment in the Republic of Korea of an International Centre for Documentary Heritage as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO**

The item proceeded without debate and the decision was unanimously adopted. On behalf of the Republic of Korea, the Mayor of Cheongju City, Mr Lee Seung Hun took the floor and affirmed that the International Centre for Documentary Heritage will be a strong partner of the Memory of the World programme.


The ADG/CI highlighted UNESCO’s leadership in the WSIS process and the role of ICTs in achieving the SDGs. He stated that the report made emphasis on ICTs, SDG 16 on public access to information and the ROAM principles which were adopted during the 38 General Conference. The ADG-CI further asserted UNESCO’s key focus on the issue of connectively which was crosscutting under social human sciences and culture, Priority Africa and youth empowerment.

Several Member states including Kenya took the floor. They expressed support for the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) outcomes, emphasized the importance of harnessing the power of ICTs and internet connectivity and requested for more focus on sustainable ICTs to counter the challenge of digital divide. One Member State also noted the importance of artificial intelligence and proposed that UNESCO could establish a working group on the same.

They called for consistent action through use of the internet to counter radicalization, a balanced approach on dealing with hate speech and a more intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach.

They welcomed the resolution on the WSIS+10 review adopted in December 2015 and recalled the internet universality and ROAM principles as important for building knowledge societies.

Concern was also raised over fake/rumour based news, the challenge of connecting the unconnected and bridging the digital divide.

In his response, the ADG-CI, Mr Frank La Rue stated that UNESCO was promoting universal access to internet for all to bridge the digital divide and remove barriers for people with disabilities as well as language and gender barriers. On a request for a working group on artificial intelligence, the ADG-CI stated that UNESCO was working on it and wanted to develop ethics and a humanistic approach to it. He informed a session to be held in 2018 at UNESCO would be dedicated to elections, the internet and democratic processes.

Regarding the draft resolution, Member States requested for clarification on when the internet universality indicators would be formulated. It was explained that the formulation...
process would end in November 2018, with UNESCO emphasising on high quality internet for everyone, rich or poor. Member States were invited to participate in the process.

Following the discussions, the draft resolution was adopted after an amendment through a consensus text. The amendment invited Member States and all other relevant stakeholders to voluntarily strengthen their participation in the process of UNESCO’s WSIS endeavour in defining and when established, applying internet universality indicators recommended by the IPDC.

**Quebec’s Call for Action: Internet and the Radicalization of Youth**

The representative of the Director-General stated that “Quebec’s Call for Action: Internet and the Radicalization of Youth” was approved by the 202nd session of the Executive Board. He expressed gratitude to the governments of Quebec and Canada for hosting the international conference on “the Internet and Radicalization of Youth: Preventing, Acting and Living Together conference” from 30 October to 1 November 2016.

Member States and one observer took part in the subsequent debate. Member states expressed support for the Quebec’s Call for Action and called for a strategic approach to counter radicalization. Some delegates informed of efforts in their own countries to prevent violent extremism through research, education, digital literacy efforts and awareness-raising campaigns.

One Member State expressed concern about the reference to the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, pointing out that it had been taken note of in the General Assembly, rather than endorsed.

Speaking as an observer, the representative of the Holy See stated that ignorance was one of the worst forms of poverty in our times and that there was need to go beyond the naïve understanding of the media especially social media which could be a humane form of communication by itself. He emphasized on the need to deal with fake news adding further that religion should not be invoked for selfish reasons.

In his reply, the representative of the Director-General clarified that the draft resolution was to endorse the Quebec Call for Action, not the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action.

Member states adopted the draft decision and endorsed the Quebec’s Call for Action.

**Establishment in Quito, Ecuador, of an International Centre of Advanced Communication Studies for Latin America (CIESPAL) as a centre under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2)**

After a brief introduction by ADG/CI, the item proceeded without debate and the decision was unanimously adopted.

**Desirability of a standard-setting instrument on international collaboration in the field of Open Educational Resources (OER)**

Member States including Kenya and one observer took part in the ensuing debate. They reiterated the importance of the international collaboration in the field of OER to achieve SDG
4 and enhance access to quality education and recognized the long-standing leadership of UNESCO in OER.

They welcomed the “Ljubljana Action Plan” and the adopted multistakeholder approach and expressed their appreciation to UNESCO and the Government of Slovenia for organizing and hosting the Second World OER Congress in September 2017.

Several delegates stated that OER can play a fundamental role in supporting indigenous languages and stressed that such resources should consider and preserve national cultures and local values, as well as respecting authors’ intellectual inputs.

Acknowledging the differences in the existing educational frameworks, a majority of delegates expressed support for the establishment of a standard-setting instrument in the form of a recommendation. In this regard, an appeal was made for extra-budgetary resources in support of activities towards this new recommendation.

Member States asserted that the new normative framework, should promote greater awareness of OER and assist Member States in positioning OER in their national educational systems, in respect of national and regional provisions.

The draft decision was adopted.

**Strengthening UNESCO’s leadership in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the issue of Impunity**

In his introduction of this item, ADG/CI spoke about the Multistakeholder Consultation on Strengthening the Implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which included both an online consultation and a face-to-face meeting in Geneva in June 2017.

He emphasized that the outcome document of that consultation presented a series of options for action. ADG/CI highlighted UNESCO’s focus on the “three Ps” approach of prevention of, protection against and prosecution of attacks against journalists.

Many member States including Kenya expressed their support for UNESCO’s strengthened leadership in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action and welcomed the proposed resolution and outcome document of the multi-stakeholder consultation. One Member State suggested that it be complemented by a more strategic document to assist stakeholders in implementation.

Member States reaffirmed their countries commitment to freedom of expression and the safety of journalists and underlined that focus should be placed on translating the progress achieved at the international level into national policies and practices.

Delegates noted that increased cooperation on Safety of Journalists, both within and beyond the United Nations system, was necessary, including through the informal Groups of Friends that had been set up in Paris, New York and Geneva and through the newly announced United Nations focal points.
Research and monitoring on the safety of journalists were deemed important, including through monitoring SDG indicator 16.10.1 and through academic networks.

Several member states also expressed their condolences following a terrorist attack on a television station in Afghanistan.

There was a lot of debate on the definition of “journalist” as used in the draft resolution. Some Member States stated that they did not support the expanded interpretation of the term “journalist” with Russia stating that “social media producers” could not be equated with the status of real journalists. A majority of the Member States however argued that the language used in the draft resolution was consistent with previous UNESCO decisions.

Member States called for more emphasis in addressing specific threats to the safety of women journalists, both online and offline given the rise in sexual harassment and attacks on women journalists.

One delegate maintained that it could not be overlooked that though there was an increase in women journalists killed, the wide majority of journalists killed were men in countries experiencing armed conflict. However, some member states from the Group of Friends for Safety of Journalists asserted their support for the safety of all journalists regardless of gender and deemed it inappropriate to make a comparison between the number of woman journalists and the number of men journalists killed.

In response to interventions made by delegates, the representative of the Director-General clarified that the Outcome Document was not a new Plan of Action, but rather an evolving suggestion of options for those actors that wish to implement the UN Plan.

He emphasized that safety should be applied across the board for all journalists and that investigations into crimes against journalists must be carried out without prejudice. ADG/CI stated that the definition of “journalist” used in the draft resolution was consistent with previous decisions of the Executive Board, including Decision 5.1.1 adopted by the 201st Executive Board held in spring 2017.

Regarding the draft resolution, a consensus text was agreed upon on a particularly contentious paragraph concerning various categories of journalists as follows: “Strongly condemning all attacks against journalists, media workers as well as social media producers who generate a significant amount of journalism, online and offline, and recognizing the need to improve safety conditions for journalists in all situations, including armed conflict.”

After a lengthy debate on several proposed amendments to the draft resolution, the resolution was adopted.

**Conclusions of the Youth Forum**

Two young change makers, Monika Aksentievksa and Mortaza Behboudi, spoke about matters that arose during the Youth Forum. These included proposals to facilitate linkages between media and youth organizations in order to generate content on key issues, as well as to connect young experts on specific themes with youth that have technological capacities to
They also called for UNESCO to support a series of webinars produced by youth for youth, to be followed by a face-to-face event, and they noted the relevance of including in these efforts the participation of experienced journalists, representatives of civil society and international organizations working in the field of the safety of journalists.

Several Member States including Kenya took the floor and welcomed the outcomes of the Youth Forum and acknowledged youth as “agents for change” and partners for achieving the SDGs.

The ADG/CI stated that it would be better to have more time for the Youth Forum for young people to interact with UNESCO’s Sectors and Member States. Stressing that young people are the key actors in achieving sustainable development, he announced that regional meetings would follow the Youth Forum.

The Commission agreed to recommend to the General Conference the adoption of the Resolution, marking the completion of its work.

The draft decision was adopted.

### 4.6. THE JOINT MEETING OF COMMISSIONS

The Joint Meeting of Commissions of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO met on three occasions and was chaired by the chairperson of the APX Commission, H.E. Ms. Lorena Sol de Pool, Ambassador/Permanent Delegate of El Salvador to UNESCO.

The Joint Commission mainly discussed the draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 and adopted the Appropriation Resolution for 2018-2019.

The Appropriation Resolution for 2018-2019 totaling $1,224,746,700 including all sources of funding is financed in the following manner:

1. **An appropriated Regular programme budget of $595.2M.** This amount consists of $581.2 million assessments on Member States; $11 M funded from residual balance of the Special Account for Management Costs (previously FITOCA); and an additional appropriation of $3M funded from other sources such as accumulated unallocated arrears.

2. **By extra budgetary funds amounting to $629,546,700.**

In the context of the withdrawal of the US from UNESCO in 2019, the appropriation authorized to the regular program budget shall be financed by an assessment on Member States of $581.2 million comprised of $326.5 million in 2018 and $254.7 million in 2019.

However even with the withdrawal of the United States, the expenditure plan of $518 million, of which $507 million shall be financed by an assessment of Member States shall still apply.
The 39th General Conference also adopted the **39 C/6 Addendum**, which is the Recommendations by the Executive Board on the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5). The same also requests the Director General to present a **39 C/5 implementation plan** that takes into account the adjusted budget levels to the 204th session of the Executive Board (April 2018) in the context of the withdrawal of the United States.

### 4.7. THE FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND GENERAL QUESTIONS, PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS (APX COMMISSION)

The Finance, Administration and General Questions, Programme support and External Relations (APX Commission) began its work by electing its Bureau composed of its Chairperson, H.E. Ms Lorena Sol de Pool (El Salvador) and 4 Vice-Chairpersons (Spain, Slovenia, Philippines, Qatar) and a Rapporteur (South Africa).

The APX Commission adopted its agenda and examined the following items:

**Report by the Director-General on Communications received from Member States invoking the Provisions of Article IV.C, Paragraph 8(C), of the Constitution**

The Commission examined the procedures to be followed by the General Conference when considering communications requesting the right to vote.

The APX Commission established a Working Group on Voting Rights with one representative per electoral group. The following were appointed to the working group during the 39th Session of the General Conference: Germany, Slovenia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Namibia and Oman.

It was recalled that a Member State shall have no vote in the General Conference if the total amount of contributions due from it exceeds the total amount of contributions payable by it for the current year and the immediately preceding calendar year. The General Conference may nevertheless permit such a Member State to vote, if it is satisfied that failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member State.

Consequently, the General Conference considered that Antigua and Barbuda, Comoros, Gabon, Israel, Libya, Federated States of Micronesia, Sao Tome and Principe, and United States of America were deprived of the right to vote at the 39th session of the General Conference.

Continuity and institutional memory was underlined as being crucial for the sensitive task of the Working Group. The need to institutionalize the working group was also underlined. Consequently, based on the proposal of the APX Commission the Plenary of the General Conference decided to establish the Working Group on Voting Rights for the 40th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, which will composed of: Germany (Group I), Slovenia (Group II), El Salvador (Group III) Philippines (Group IV), Mozambique (Group Va) and Oman (Group Vb).
Definition of Regions with a View To the execution by the Organization of Regional Activities

The APX Commission recommended to the General Conference to admit New Caledonia as Associate Member to UNESCO in the Asia and Pacific region with a view to its participation in the regional activities of the Organization. The item was adopted without debate.

The Importance of Sound in Today’s World: Promoting Best Practices

The APX Commission adopted without debate a resolution recognizing the importance of sound in today’s world. The resolution, highlights that the sound environment is a key component in the equilibrium of all human beings in their relationship with others and with the world, in its economic, environmental, societal, medical, industrial and cultural dimensions.

It further notes that the sound environment reflects and shapes our individual and collective behaviour, and our productivity and capacity to live in harmony together. Giving more importance to sound-related issues in our increasingly noisy world has thus become a vital matter.

Consequently, UNESCO, in light of its different fields of competence, namely education, science, the social and human sciences, culture, communication and information, is the organization best placed to take account of sound-related issues by making the public at large more aware and promoting best practices among the youngest, alongside highlighting, preserving even the least significant sounds.

The Commission adopted the resolution encouraging Member States to foster the mobilization of extra-budgetary contributions to enable UNESCO, in association with the National Commissions and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), to promote best practices relating to sound in all areas of life from early childhood.

United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and Appointment of Member States’ Representatives to the UNESCO Staff Pension Committee for 2018-2019

The Commission’s attention was drawn to the fact that the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund’s management was a complex and a highly technical process. For that reason, a recommendation was made to extend the term of the Member States’ representatives from two to four years. This would ensure continuity and experience in the administration of the Fund, and also align us with the United Nations practices.

The Commission underlined that prior to their appointment to the UNESCO Staff Pension Committee, Member States should be provided with clear explanations on their expected roles and obligations in the Pension Fund. Prior briefing sessions on working procedures of the Fund would be also needed.

Kenya was re-elected to the UNESCO Staff Pension Committee for the period 2018 – 2021. Other elected members are from Brazil and the Philippines. Algeria, Egypt and Iran were also elected as alternate members.
Staff Salaries, Allowances and Benefits

The representative of the Director-General informed the Commission of the main changes in salaries, allowances and benefits that have been implemented since the last General Conference. It was explained that these changes result from decisions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly or (by virtue of authority) the International Civil Service Commission for the United Nations Common System, of which UNESCO is an integral part.

The Commission asked for clarification on the impact of the changes related to the Compensation Review on the serving staff. The Secretariat confirmed that transitional measures were put in place and that serving staff were protected, although some staff members indeed questioned the impact of the review on their individual remuneration.

The Commission endorsed the measures already taken by the Director-General pursuant to the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022

The representative of the Director-General introduced the new Strategy, which is aimed at equipping UNESCO with human resource capacity to deliver on its mandates, particularly for the 2030 Agenda. The Commission was informed that the Strategy will help to strengthen staff’s capabilities and also create an enabling and engaging work environment on the other.

Member States, including Kenya, welcomed the proposed Strategy, reiterating that the staff was the Organization’s most important asset and key for its success.

The Commission noted that a tangible progress was made in terms of Gender Parity but stressed that this objective should be achieved across all levels and grades at the Secretariat and the gender-neutral language should be applied.

Some delegations, including Kenya, raised concerns about Geographical Representation and reiterated the need to scale up efforts to improve the situation and for more staff to be recruited from non- and under-represented countries. The representative of the Director-General indicated that targets in terms of geographical distribution and gender parity will be set and monitored for Senior Staff of the Organization. The Commission was assured that the Young Professionals Programme (YPP) would also be used as a means of improving geographical representation.

With regard to staff mobility, the Commission stressed the need to put an effective mobility policy and scheme in place and make it mandatory for staff, particularly when considered for promotion.

The Commission also highlighted the importance of information transparency, in particular the need for the Secretariat to share information on vacancies and appointments in a timely manner. The need to streamline job descriptions for vacancy notices was stressed.
Scale of Assessment and Currency of Member States’ Contributions and the Working Capital Fund: Level of Administration

The representative of the Director-General indicated that the scale of assessment of Member States’ contribution for 2018 was known, whereas it was not the case for 2019 since this will be adopted by United Nations General Assembly only in December 2018.

With regard to the currency of assessment and payment of contributions for the next biennium, the Commission was assured that the euro percentage of assessed contributions should remain at the same level of 47%.

Several Member States raised concerns about the impact of the USA’s withdrawal on the scale of assessment for 2019. The Commission was assured that the impact would be significant in percentages but not in amounts. Upon the request of several delegations, the Secretariat provided a simulation of the impact of the USA withdrawal in 2019 based on the 2018 scale of assessment.

Furthermore, the Commission noted the proposal of the Director-General to maintain the Working Capital Fund at the level of US $30 million for 2018 but reduce it to $23.4 million for 2019, in view of the withdrawal of the United States of America at the end of 2018.

The Commission sought clarifications regarding $6.6 million reduction of the Working Capital for 2019. The representative of the Director-General clarified that the withdrawal of the United States of America in 2019 would require additional contributions from Member States if the Working Capital Fund was kept at the same level. The proposed reduction would have no impact on current Member States’ contributions to the Fund.

Some Member States inquired how and when the reduced $6.6 million would be used. It was indicated that the reduction of the Working Capital would be used to partially settle the USA’s arrears. The funds will be kept in the Organization’s balance sheet for the next biennium and that the Director-General will present a proposal on the level of the Working Capital to the 40th session of the General Conference taking into account the impact of the withdrawal of Member States.

Report by the Director-General, In Cooperation with the Headquarters Committee, On Managing the UNESCO Complex

The examination of the agenda item commenced by a presentation by H.E. Mr Ali Zainal, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Qatar, Chairperson of the Headquarters Committee for the period 2015 to 2017, on the work undertaken by the Committee in relation to the benefits of the Optimization Plan, revenue generating activities and the maintenance of Headquarters installations.

The Commission highly appreciated the high quality of the work undertaken by the Headquarters Committee.

The APX Commission adopted the resolution authorizing the Director-General to enter into negotiations for a loan to finance the renovation of UNESCO’s Building V (Miollis). A query was raised as to how the repayment of any loan would be ensured. It was stated in response that
negotiations are only a preliminary stage of a process which would involve discussions at the Headquarters Committee and the Executive Board including on the repayment and the financing related to such repayments of any eventual loans. It was announced that France as the host country decided to guarantee the interest payment of such a loan.

The Commission also inquired about the evaluation of the project, asking if the estimated budget of €42 million for the renovation might increase in the next two years. The representative of the Director-General explained that a relevant provision was already estimated and included in the project’s budget but in case the implementation period is prolonged, the costs could increase because of inflation.

The Commission was also informed that the project was prepared on the basis of the experience gained during the implementation of the Belmont Plan, while taking into account the benchmarks applied at other United Nations agencies. The Commission was further assured that the relevant information would be presented to the Executive Board’s examination, following further analysis by the Headquarters Committee.

Kenya served as Vice-President of the Headquarters Committee for the period 2015 to 2017 and has been re-elected as a Member of the Committee for an additional 4 years (2017 to 2021).

**Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO**

It was recalled that at its 38th session, the General Conference decided to establish an open-ended working group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO (38 C/Resolution 101). The above-mentioned working group met throughout the 2016-2017 biennium and submitted its report to the Executive Board with a view to enabling it to make its recommendations to the General Conference at its 39th session.

The role of the Working Group was acknowledged as being highly important in fostering a holistic and comprehensive reform of UNESCO, particularly its governing bodies, in order to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency in governance and to improve strategic decision-making in the Organization.

All the Member States, including Kenya, which took the floor in the debate, commended the key role of the President of the 38th session of the General Conference, H.E. Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa, the co-Chairs from the Philippines, Norway and Hungary, as well as the Secretariat, in guaranteeing such a valuable outcome of the Working Group.

It was also highlighted that the open-ended composition of the Group contributed to enrich its debates and render democratic legitimacy to its work. The General Conference was therefore presented with 134V recommendations of which 4 did not have consensus and therefore placed in brackets.

During the debate, two major points of view clearly emerged. One group of Member States wished to endorse the already-agreed recommendations and leave aside those that did not enjoy consensus (bracketed recommendations). Other Members insisted that the bracketed recommendations were fundamental for reforming the Governing Bodies in light of the evolving nature of the Organization. They stressed that the current session of the General
Conference should decide on these recommendations, instead of postponing their consideration to a later stage.

The principle of establishing term limitation for the Executive Board’s membership was therefore adopted by vote. The Commission noted that the implementation of this principle would still entail a process leading to the submission of an amendment to UNESCO’s Constitution, which required a two thirds majority to become binding and effective.

With regard to recommendations related to the procedure of election of the Director-General and the reinforcement of the General Conference’s role in that respect., the Commission agreed that sufficient discussions had not taken place on these points, and that such a reform should in fact be part of the future follow-up mechanisms that have already been proposed in the document.

The Commission adopted the resolution which invites the Executive Board, the Director-General and the governing bodies of the different organs examined by the Working Group to implement the recommendations, as appropriate.

The resolution also underlines the role of the Secretariat as facilitator in the follow-up process of all the international and intergovernmental bodies (IIBs), and invites the Director-General to produce an electronic guidebook of good practices, in a timely manner to inform IIBs at their upcoming meetings in 2018 on possible concrete ways for further alignment with UNESCO’s mid-term strategy and programme and budget.

The Working Group will reconvene prior to the 40th and 41st session of the General Conference. Its primary focus will be on the implementation of the recommendations on governance adopted by the 39th session of the General Conference.

Financial Report and Audited Consolidated Financial Statements relating to the Accounts Of Unesco For The Year Ended 31 December 2016 And Report By The External Auditor

The External Auditor of UNESCO noted that the deficit of the Organization went from US $25 million in 2015 to US $49 million at the end of 2016 mainly due to a decrease of assessed contributions by US $19 million and US $60 million in voluntary contributions, both of which are compensated by a decrease of US $56 million in expenses.

The Commission noted that, for 2016, the External Auditors issued 14 recommendations, which focus on several measures to fund the long-term liability for After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI); to make the IT environment secure and protected from external risks; to adopt a more realistic exchange rate for the preparation of the budget, and to improve the accounting and financial information system and to reconcile the assets recorded by Headquarters with the physical inventory.

The members of the APX Commission expressed, by acclamation, their deep appreciation for the high-quality work and excellent support provided by the External Auditor and his team to render UNESCO more efficient.

The Commission inquired when the External Auditor’s report on UNESCO field offices will be submitted and whether a strategy was needed to fund the After-Service Health Insurance
(ASHI) liability which fluctuates from one year to another. The Commission was assured that the report on field offices will be presented to the Executive Board at its 204th session in 2018.

It was also clarified that the variation of the liability was due to changes in assumptions (actuarial rates, health care inflation, etc.). A long-term financial strategy was important, as there was a widening gap between the decreasing number of active staff and the increasing number of retirees.

**Report by the Director-General on the State of the Medical Benefits Fund (MBF) and Audit of the Medical Benefits Fund (MBF)**

The financial situation of the Medical Benefits Fund was introduced by the Chief Finance Officer, who referred to the proposed measures for the sustainability of the Fund and the After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) funding. She explained the Director-General’s recommendation to adopt a formal policy of ensuring an ideal minimum reserves level of 15 months cover of claim reimbursements.

The Commission was assured that whenever the level of reserves falls below 12 months of claim reimbursements, the MBF contribution scale should be adjusted accordingly. Further explanations were provided on the Director-General’s proposal to seek the General Conference’s authorization to transfer any balance, which may become available after the closure of the accounts, from the contributions to the MBF for associate participants under the UNESCO Programme and budget for 2015–2017 (38 C/5) to the Special Account of ASHI.

The Commission sought clarification if the External Auditor implied a possibility of non-compliance with the terms of the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal judgement. The External Auditor clarified that there was a legal risk with non-compliance and that therefore important to implement a recommendation from their audit which recommends the need to have regular actuarial evaluations and empowering the Director-General to introduce emergency measures to mitigate any financial imbalances in the fund.

As there were several Member States willing to serve as Observers on the Medical Benefits Board, three were appointed instead of the two foreseen namely: Malaysia, United Kingdom and Brazil. Canada was also appointed as an alternate to the Medical Benefits Board.

**Principles and Conditions of the Participation Programme and Emergency Assistance**

The APX Commission unanimously affirmed the crucial importance and great impact of the Participation Programme, and several Members expressed their overall satisfaction with its management.

The Commission noted that the Organization’s two global priorities, Africa and Gender Equality, were now taken duly into consideration in approving the incoming requests.

Some delegations stressed the importance of the Participation Programme for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean and the Pacific as well as for increasing UNESCO’s visibility at the national level. Some Members requested that the current number of seven requests be maintained in 2018-2019. Others underlined the importance of offering additional
opportunities for training and capacity-building of National Commissions through the Participation Programme.

Member States called for flexibility in the evaluation of requests, notably with regard to application of criteria on the per capita income for middle-income countries or gender equality for the Caribbean States. Concerns were also expressed on difficulties for online application, particularly in countries with low bandwidth Internet access.

The Commission was assured that despite the limited resources, more efforts would be deployed by the Secretariat for training, when possible, with the help of other National Commissions.

**Proposals for Qualitative Dialogue between Member States and NGOs, including within the Governing Bodies**

The representative of the Director-General recalled that the General Conference at its 38th session invited the Director-General to reflect on new forms of information and exchange with a view to reinforcing interaction between Member States, the Secretariat and non-governmental organizations.

He further informed the Commission of the ongoing reflection within the Executive Board regarding new proposals for the creation of additional opportunities for such a qualitative dialogue, drawing on best practices of other United Nations agencies and similar institutions.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the work accomplished and highlighted the importance of the contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the critical role of a multi-stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Some delegations stressed the need to take into account the intergovernmental nature of UNESCO’s work and to clearly define the different roles and responsibilities of Member States and non-governmental partners within the Organization.

The crucial role of UNESCO National Commissions as the main interlocutor in interacting with the civil society at the national level was also underlined.

**Proposals by Member States for the Celebration of Anniversaries in 2018-2019 with which UNESCO could be associated**

The Commission was informed that a list of 48 anniversaries with which UNESCO can be associated during the next biennium was proposed for the General Conference’s endorsement, in pursuant to the decisions of the Executive Board at its 201st and 202nd sessions.

The Commission noted that the situation remained a cause of concern with respect to geographical distribution and gender balance in relation with these celebrations. It was clarified that the quality of the proposals and considerations relating to geographical and gender balance therein were the responsibility of Member States.
The Commission adopted the resolution which encourages Member States of all regions to make proposals in order to improve geographical distribution and gender balance, by also selecting eminent women, according to the criteria approved by the governing bodies and by naming as priority criterion for the selection of anniversaries their clear connection with the ideals and missions of our Organization.

**Draft Regulatory Framework regarding Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO**

The Commission took note that the purpose of the enhanced Draft Regulatory Framework was to ensure that Associations and Clubs for UNESCO meet the highest possible standards in terms of their alignment with UNESCO’s priorities and their responsibility in using the Organization’s name and logo, under the general oversight of National Commissions.

Some Member States had noted serious problems related to the functioning of such entities and on the utilization of the Organization’s name. Member States thus, in general, commended the Secretariat’s efforts and expressed their overall support for the Draft Regulatory Framework, which should provide a legitimate basis and guidance for optimizing National Commissions’ collaboration with Associations and Clubs for UNESCO.

It was also noted that the Secretariat should have adequate capacity to support National Commissions in handling the complicated cases of unauthorized use of UNESCO’s name by the Associations and Clubs for UNESCO.

**Staff Regulations and Staff Rules**

The representative of the Director-General provided a comprehensive presentation on the rationale of the proposed amendments to Staff Regulation regarding the Mandatory Age of Separation and those on gifts.

With regard to the Mandatory Age of Separation, to be raised to 65 years for all staff, the Secretariat proposed an implementation date of January 2020. This would mean that the 110 staff reaching retirement age would retire in 2018-2019, and which would result in 110 vacant posts.

It was explained that such a postponement would create opportunities for mobility and career advancement; allow to bring new skills into the Organization; lead to staff cost savings; and provide the new Director-General with some flexibility for adjusting structures and units. It was also recalled that some other United Nations Specialized Agencies had also postponed the age of retirement.

While some Members of the Commission were supportive of the proposed measure due to the budgetary situation at UNESCO and in view of the need for some flexibility in staff management, the others were, however, not absolutely convinced with the Secretariat’s arguments, stressing that the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 2015 be implemented in full, and hence that the Mandatory Age of Retirement of 65 be effective as from 1 January 2018.
The Commission strongly felt that UNESCO, being part of the United Nations Common System, should ensure that its staff has the same conditions of service as staff from other United Nations agencies.

Some delegations emphasized the human rights dimension of the proposed measure, including the element of age discrimination while others stressed that the postponement of the implementation date to 2020 may affect negatively on the retention of experience, skills and institutional memory in the Organization.

A majority of Commission members therefore urged that the decision taken by Member States in New York be duly respected by UNESCO. Consequently, the APX Commission decided to retain the effective date of 1 January 2018.

With regard to the proposed changes to Staff Regulation gifts, the representative of the Director-General explained that this proposal was prepared pursuant to the Executive Board decision and was in line with the United Nations Secretariat Staff Regulation on Gifts. Once adopted by the General Conference, the Secretariat will work on a detailed policy and guidance, in consultation with the Ethics Office.

The Commission pointed out that Member States should be made aware of UNESCO’s regulations on gifts. The regulation stipulates that no staff member shall accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or remuneration from any government or from any other source external to the Organization, unless in the opinion of the Director-General, such acceptance is compatible with his/her status as an international civil servant.

Methods of Preparing the Budget, Budget Estimates for 2018 -2021, and Budgeting Techniques

The Commission adopted without debate the resolution acknowledging the work undertaken by the Secretariat in preparing the draft programme and budget for 2018 - 2021 (39 C/5) on the principle of Results-Based Budgeting (RBB).

RBB consists of budget formulation which revolves around a set of predefined objectives and Expected Results as well as expected results that justify the resource requirements which are derived from and linked to outputs required to achieve such results, and in which actual performance in achieving results is measured by objective performance indicators.

The Commission invited the Director-General, when preparing the Budget for 2020-2021 (40 C/5), to continue applying the same budgeting techniques while introducing any improvement as considered necessary especially in light of the Integrated Budget Framework.

Adoption of the Provisional Budget Ceiling

The Chairperson recalled that the 39 C/5 budget was prepared, for the first time, within an Integrated Budget Framework following intense discussions held at the Executive Board to reach consensus concerning the budgetary aspects.

With reference to the Integrated Budget Framework, some delegations expressed concern on the fact that UNESCO was becoming more reliant on the extra-budgetary contributions. In
response, the Commission was assured that the Organization will continue to ensure that the extra-budgetary resources will be used in full alignment with the priorities and expected results of the C/5. It was also recalled that this approach gives the holistic picture of the financial resources for the Organizations’ programme implementation.

It was further explained that the eventual non-fulfilment of the additional voluntary contributions (Gap) should not be considered as budgetary deficit and it would in no way be compensated by additional assessed contributions from Member States. Member States were further informed that due to the departure of the United States of America from the Organization as from January 2019, the amount of Member States’ assessed contributions for 2018-2019 will be different between year 2018 and year 2019.

The commission adopted the integrated budget framework consisting of a budget ceiling of US$1,224,746,700 of which US$ 581.2 million is from the assessments on Member States. The integrated budget ceiling was thereafter adopted by the Plenary of the General Conference.

**Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018 -2021**

In view of the withdrawal of the United States of America from UNESCO as of 31 December 2018, the Commission adopted the programme and the revised budget ceilings for each Chapter in draft programme and budget for 2018 - 2021 (39 C/5) corresponding to the US $595.2 million budget scenario within the overall integrated budget framework which was prepared to replace budget numbers appearing in the 39 C/5.

The Commission was further assured that full information on the revised budget breakdown would be provided to the Executive Board at its 204th session (April 2018).

**Collection of Member States’ Contributions**

The representative of the Director-General informed the Commission that as at end of October 2017, 63 Member States (or 32% of the total number of Member States) were not up-to-date with their contributions. As such, the cash position of the Organization will be in deficit after October 2017 until the end of the year. This deficit could be covered from the Working Capital Fund in November 2017 after which borrowing would be needed.

The APX Commission was also informed of the impact of the continued delays in payments of assessed contributions for next biennium 2018-2019 (39 C/5), which could require a budget freeze of $152 million. This would begin with US$ 76 million budget freeze as of 1 January 2018 in order to ensure the organization remains within its available cash flow.

The APX Commission reaffirmed that the payment of assessed contributions was a legal obligation and expressed concern that continuing non-payment of contributions by some Member States has an adverse impact for the programme delivery, including on UNESCO’s contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Commission noted that programme implementation was already impacted by the implementation of the Contingency Plan in 2017.

The Commission also introduced an amendment to the draft resolution, suggesting to hold a strategic discussion at the Executive Board before the preparation for the 40 C/5 about the
overall financial situation of UNESCO and asking the Secretariat to prepare a background paper to that end.

The Commission adopted the resolution which recalls the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as set out in United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy review (QCPR), which recalls the important role and comparative advantage of a relevant, coherent, efficient and effective United Nations system which should be provided with sufficient resources in its support to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The resolution also strongly encourages Member States to pay their assessed contributions in a timely manner, to increase their support to the Organization in the coming months through voluntary contributions, contributions to priority programmes, in-kind contributions and the flexible use of existing donations and other possible means, and recalls the need for extra-budgetary resources to serve the objectives of the Programme and Budget 2018-2019 (39 C/5).

4.8. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Nominations Committee began its work by electing its Bureau composed of its Chairperson, H.E. Ms Samira Al Moosa (Oman) and 4 Vice-Chairpersons (Azerbaijan, Cuba, Côte d’Ivoire and Nepal).

PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

The Nominations Committee approved the recommendation of the Executive Board to elect H.E. Ms Zohour Alaoui (Morocco) as President of the 39th Session of the General Conference.

On recommendation of the Executive Board, the Nominations Committee also approved the Heads of Delegations of 36 Member States for the posts of Vice-Presidents of the 39th session of the General Conference.

CHAIRPERSONS OF COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Following the recommendations of the Executive Board, the Nominations Committee approved the following nominations for the Chairpersons for the commissions and committees of the General Conference:

- Education Commission (ED Commission) - H.E. Amb. Prof. George GODIA (Kenya)
- Natural Science Commission (SC Commission) – Sudan
- Social and Human Sciences Commission (SHS Commission) – Slovakia
- Culture Commission (CLT Commission) – Italy
- Communication and Information Commission (CI Commission) - Australia
Kenya was also a member of the General Committee (Bureau) of the General Conference, having been elected Chairperson of the Education Commission. The General Committee is composed of the President of the General Conference, 36 Vice-Presidents and Chairpersons of the commissions and committees of General Conference.

ELECTIONS TO UNESCO COMMITTEES AND SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

The Nominations Committee examined the candidatures of Member States to the Executive Board as well as Subsidiary Organs of UNESCO.

Kenya was successfully elected to the following 5 key committees for the period 2017 to 2021:

1. Legal Committee

The Legal Committee considers proposals for the amendment of the Constitution and of the related rules of procedures or regulations. It also considers agenda items referred to it by the General Conference, appeals submitted by sponsors of draft resolutions to the General Conference that have been considered inadmissible by the Director-General, legal questions submitted to it by the General Conference or any of its organs.

The Legal Committee also considers the reports relating on conventions or recommendations transmitted to it by the General Conference. Kenya, represented by Ms. Christine M’kwenda, First Secretary at the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO was unanimously elected Rapporteur of the Legal Committee.

2. Headquarters Committee

The Headquarters Committee coordinates with the Director-General the management policy of UNESCO’s Headquarters and gives the Director-General all guidelines and recommendations that it deems useful.

The Committee meets whenever necessary to treat questions relating to Headquarters submitted by the Director-General or by one of the members of the Committee. The Committee reports to the General Conference on the work carried out and the programmes to be planned for the future. Kenya served as Vice-President of the Headquarters Committee from 2015 to 2017.

3. Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC)

The IGBC is the Intergovernmental Body composed of 36 Member States. It examines the work of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and takes decisions on issues regarding UNESCO’s actions with regard to Bioethics. The IBC is a body of 36 independent experts that
follows progress in the life sciences and its applications in order to ensure respect for human dignity and freedom. It promotes reflection on the ethical and legal issues raised by research in the life sciences and their applications.

Further to the election to the IGBC, Kenya was also elected Vice-President of the IGBC for the period 2017 to 2021.

4. **International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)**

UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments. MAB combines the natural and social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable. Its World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts over 600 sites of which 6 are in Kenya.

The election to the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) were highly competitive with 7 Africa Member States vying for 3 seats. Kenya was elected with the highest number of votes (115 votes). Also elected were Côte d’Ivoire (92 votes) and South Africa (90 votes).

5. **UNESCO Staff Pension Committee**

The UNESCO Staff Pension Committee is a key body responsible that supports the administration of Pension and Retirement Benefits, Interpretation and enforcement of the United Nations Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) regulations and rules to member organizations, Investments of member contributions for eventual payment and the provision of inability payments for staff affected with sickness, accidents while in service of the UN.

Kenya continues to be a Member of the following committees until 2019:

1. **Executive Board of UNESCO**: The Executive Board is a powerful decision-making body consisting of 58 Member States. It examines the programme and budget of UNESCO and provides guidance on their implementation. The Executive Board is also responsible for interviewing and nominating a candidate for the position of Director-General of UNESCO.

2. **The Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP)** a key programme that supports countries build capacity in the sustainable management of water resources

3. **The Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformation’s Programme (MOST)** which aims to support poverty eradication, youth empowerment and social development programmes.
REPLACEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO

In the context of elections of the Members of the Executive Board the Nominations Committee considered a draft resolution submitted by Portugal on behalf of the Member States of the Electoral Group I (Europe and North America), related to the replacement of the United States of America in the Executive Board of UNESCO upon the withdrawal of this Member State from UNESCO effective 31 December 2018.

The scope of the discussion extended to broader governance issues. Member States drew attention to the need to review the representation of different Electoral Groups at the Executive Board in the event of the admission or effective withdrawal of any Member State.

The Nominations Committee adopted the draft resolution as amended. It was subsequently submitted to the plenary meeting of the General Conference for its consideration. In light of absence of consensus, the draft resolution was not adopted by the Plenary of the General Conference.

ELECTION OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR OF UNESCO

The Nominations Committee elected the Auditor General of Canada, as the new External Auditor of UNESCO for the period 2018 – 2021.

4.9. LEGAL COMMITTEE

The Legal Committee elected the Chairperson, 2 Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur as follows:

- Mr. Pierre Michel Eisemann (France)- Chairperson
- Mr Meshal Hayat (Kuwait)- Vice-Chairperson
- Mr Eduardo Leoni Patron Costas (Argentina)- Vice-Chairperson
- Ms Christine M’kwenda (Kenya)- Rapporteur

The Committee considered the following agenda items:

Consideration and adoption of the Agenda and Timetable of Work

The Legal Committee adopted the agenda and timetable of work.

The Committee raised concerns over a number of items on the General Conference agenda, under the section “Constitutional and legal questions” that had not been submitted to the Committee for consideration.

It was stressed that the all items of a legal nature needed to be presented to the Committee for consideration. The Committee deemed that it was important to bring to the attention of the General Conference that it was at its disposal throughout the session to consider any legal
questions submitted to it by the General Conference or any of its organs, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 37.1 (d) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference.

**Examination of Communications on the Admissibility of Draft Resolutions proposing the adoption of amendments to the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (documents 39 C/5 and Addenda, 39 C/6 and Addenda)**

This item was considered in view of a procedure established by the General Conference since its 29th session that requires sponsors of draft resolutions (DR) proposing amendments to the Draft Programme and Budget which are deemed inadmissible in the opinion of the Director-General, to appeal to the General Conference, after submission to the Legal Committee, to rule on their admissibility.

The Committee was informed by the representative of the Director-General that no appeals had been lodged by Member States within the specified time for submission of appeals. Consequently, the Committee did not examine this item further.

**Summary of the Reports received from Member States on the measures taken to implement the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (Document 39 C/24)**

The Summary of Reports received from Member States on the measures taken to implement the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education was presented by the representative of the Director-General. It comprised of the results of the 9th consultation of Member States on the implementation of the 1960 Convention and Recommendation, launched in 2016 by the Director-General.

The representative of the Director-General reported that responses were received from 67 Members States, 49 of which were States Parties to the 1960 Convention. It was stated that the 9th consultation had seen an improvement in the quality of reporting and a 13.5% increase in the responses from member states compared to the 8th Consultation (2006-2011).

The Legal Committee took note of the summary and the comments made by the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations at the 202nd session of the Executive Board.

The Committee made a number of amendments to the text of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of document 39 C/24.


The consolidated report was presented by the representative of the Director-General. The report contained the results of the 6th consultation of Member States on implementation of the 1974 Recommendation.

It was stated that 83 Member States submitted reports in response to the consultation, a 51% increase from the previous consultation held in 2012.
The Committee took note of the summary together with the comments made by the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations at the 202nd session of the Executive Board.

It was proposed that the next consolidated report should give a better reflection of the two essential themes contained in the 1974 Recommendation, i.e.

- Education for international understanding, cooperation and peace
- Education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms

Joint cooperation with other United Nations bodies especially in the implementation and monitoring of target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 was encouraged.

The Committee made a number of amendments to the text of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 9 of document 39 C/25.

**Consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 1978 Revised Recommendation concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics (document 39 C/27)**

The representative of the Director-General reported that the revisions of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) began in 2008 and were completed following extensive review and consultation involving all UNESCO member States in 2011 and 2013 respectively, upon which they were adopted by the General Conference. The first international education surveys using the new classifications was launched in 2014 for ISCED 2011 (*programmes and qualifications*) and 2016 for the ISCED-F 2013 (*fields of education and training*).

As of August 2017, nearly 90% of the countries had reported data on education and about one-third on educational attainment. UIS had provided training and capacity building to countries on the revisions. There were no plans to undertake further revisions to enable countries to get used to the 2011 and 2013 revisions.

The Legal Committee took note of the report together with the comments made in that regard by the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations at the 201st session of the Executive Board.

The Committee recommended that the term “Member State” rather than “country” be used in the consolidated report and in future documents.

Some amendments were made by the Committee to the text of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 15 of document 39 C/27.

**Consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers (document 39 C/26 Rev.)**

The 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers recognizes the value of sciences and technology for tackling various world problems.
The representative of the Director-General informed the specific guidelines had been adopted by the Executive Board for preparing reports on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation including proposals for improving the format and content of the questionnaire. 40 Member States had submitted responses to the questionnaire sent out by the Secretariat.

The Legal Committee took note of the report together with the comments made in that regard by the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations at the 202nd session of the Executive Board at its 200th session. It also took note of the additional information provided by the representative of the Director-General concerning the implementation of this Recommendation.

The Committee made several amendments to the text of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 19 of document 39 C/26 Rev.


The representative of the Director-General informed that the General Conference at its 37th session while underlining the importance and full relevance of the 1974 Recommendation, decided to revise it over a period of four years from 2014 to 2017 so as to reflect the challenges for scientific researchers which emerged over the 40 years since its adoption and to improve its monitoring and effectiveness. The 38th General Conference requested the Director-General to prepare a final draft of the revised Recommendation in consultation with Member States and other stakeholders and submit it to the 39th General Conference.

The revision involved a wide consultative process that included advisory bodies of science and technology and bioethics such as the International Bioethics Committee (IBC), the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) and the World Commission on the Ethics of Science and Technology (COMEST).

The Committee deemed that it was within the competence of the Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Commission to decide on the substantive aspects of the text of the draft recommendation on science and scientific researchers contained in Annex II of document 39 C/23, which did not call for any particular legal comment.

Regarding draft resolution 39 C/COM.SHS/DR.3, the Committee deemed that the proposals for amendments did not present any particular legal difficulty, but that they should be placed between square brackets, so that the SHS Commission could decide whether or not to include them in the final version of the draft resolution to be adopted by the General Conference.

Moreover, the SHS Commission would have to decide what role the National Commissions and UNESCO Chairs would play in the monitoring of the revised Recommendation.

Regarding draft resolution 39 C/COM.SHS/DR.4, it was stressed that the SHS Commission should ensure that the terminology in the draft resolution was consistent with that of the international instruments cited as references, and particularly with the terms of Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity mentioned in Section II of the draft text.
An observer further pointed out that the Russian version of the draft recommendation contained in Annex II of document 39 C/23 required further amendments that were not covered by the two draft resolutions, particularly to improve the definition of the term “scientific researchers” mentioned in Section I. In that respect, the Committee recalled that Member States could always submit amendments to the draft text when during its examination in SHS Commission.

In conclusion, the Committee made some amendments to the text of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 4 of document 39 C/23, while leaving some parts between square brackets.

**Draft Regulatory Framework Regarding Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO (document 39 C/54)**

The representative of the Director-General informed that the Draft Regulatory Framework regarding Associations, Centres and Clubs for UNESCO was meant to implement recommendation 6 contained in the “Action Plan for Enhancing the Cooperation of UNESCO’s Secretariat with National Commissions” which was adopted by the 37th General Conference.

The Framework was in effect aimed at clarifying rules of engagement of Associations, Centres and Clubs with UNESCO, ensuring a better alignment of their activities and maintaining the highest possible standards, enabling them work more closely with National Commissions for UNESCO and codifying the relationship between the UNESCO Secretariat, National Commissions for UNESCO and Associations and Clubs for UNESCO.

Members of the Committee examined the Draft Regulatory Framework and made technical legal amendments such as deleting “UNESCO Centres” from the document and providing a transitional period of two years to enable the gradual phasing out of “UNESCO Centres”. This was done after an explanation from the representative of the Director-General that “UNESCO Centres” existed in the past without a clear regulatory framework unlike “Category I and II Centres” of UNESCO which were well defined and regulated.

To avoid any ambiguity, it was therefore decided that only two categories should be maintained, i.e. “Associations and Clubs.” Members also made amendments to enhance monitoring on use of the UNESCO name, acronym and logo by Associations and Clubs.

Substantive issues were not examined as they were deemed to fall within the competence of the APX Commission (Finance, Administration and General Questions, Programme Support and External Relations).

**Revision of the statutes of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Intergovernmental Council (document 39 C/58)**

The representative of the Director-General explained that the 13th session of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme adopted proposed amendments to the MOST statutes in response to the decision of the 12th ordinary session that requested the secretariat to submit proposals for revision of the statutes. The representative further highlighted that the amendments touched on the following articles of the statues:
- Article II by providing greater clarity on the function of the intergovernmental Council.

- Article V where UNESCO would cover costs and expenses for the participation of representatives from Least-developed countries and small island developing states.

- Article VII where Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) would play a greater role in advising the IGC.

- Article VIII on composition of the bureau to reflect current practice in other UNESCO IGCs.

- Article IX to allow observers (member states and associate members of UNESCO not members of the IGC as well as non-member states of UNESCO) to attend the sessions.

- Article X where experts may be invited by the Director-General to attend the sessions upon request by the IGC.

- Article XII to allow meetings of SAC to be conducted by electronic means at the request of majority of the members.

- Article XIII to extend the services of the MOST secretariat to the meetings of the Bureau and SAC in addition to covering IGC sessions.

Members of the Committee examined the Draft Regulatory Framework and made a technical legal amendment under Article VIII where a new paragraph was added stating that the term of office of members of the bureau shall expire at the same time as their membership/mandate in the IGC. The Committee did not examine the substantive issues as they were deemed to fall within the competence of the Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Commission.

**Governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO (documents 39 C/20 and Addenda)**

The representative of the Director-General informed that the document on Governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO contained recommendations of the open-ended working group on governance that was established by the 38th General Conference to review the governance and procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO.

The document contained 134 recommendations which had all been agreed upon by consensus except recommendation 20 and 21 on term limits for the membership to the Executive Board and recommendation 52 and 53 on the election process of the Director-General.

The Committee requested for clarification on recommendation 92 regarding the Convention against Discrimination in Education and Conciliation and Good Offices Commission, how the recommendations would be implemented given the dire financial situation of the organization since paragraph 3 of the draft resolution did not mention the financing mechanisms and a question on whether member states in arrears would be part of the proposed working group on member state contributions.
In response, it was clarified that issues regarding the Convention against Discrimination in Education and Conciliation and Good Offices Commission would be considered in future. Regarding a financing mechanism, most of the recommendations did not have direct financial consequences. However, the monitoring mechanism of the open-ended working group was not clear and the organization would have difficulties financing meetings that went beyond 1 or 2 days.

Regarding member states in arrears being part of the working group on contributions, an amendment was made to the draft resolution providing that upon the first meeting of this working group, none of its members should be in a position to be deprived of their right to vote under Article IV.C, paragraph 8 (b), of the UNESCO Constitution.

The Committee also added a transitional provision in the resolution providing that on the first election of the members of the working group on contributions for four-year term, half of them, designated by drawing lots, would only serve a term of two years.

5. ELECTION OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

Ms. Audrey Azoulay was sworn in as the new Director-General of UNESCO on Monday 13 November 2017. Ms Azoulay takes over from Ms. Irina Bokova (Bulgaria) who served 8 years at the helm of the Organization.

Born in 1972, Ms Azoulay was France’s Minister of Culture and Communication from February 2016 to May 2017. She occupied senior positions in France’s public broadcasting sector and then served as rapporteur to France’s public auditing authority, the Cour des comptes, and as a European Commission legislative expert on issues of culture and the media.

Ms Azoulay served France’s National Cinema Centre (CNC), first as Deputy Audiovisual Director, then as Director of Financial and Legal Affairs, and finally as Deputy Director-General. She is a graduate of the Ecole National d’Administration and the Paris Institut d’études politiques. Ms Azoulay also holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from the University of Lancaster (United Kingdom).
Invoking the challenges facing the Organization, she focused on the pertinence of UNESCO’s mandate in her investiture speech. She noted that despite many limits and constraints, UNESCO has been able to demonstrate throughout its history a real capacity to bring creative responses to the challenges of the times.

Ms Azoulay highlighted the challenges posed to the world today by environmental degradation, terrorism, attempts to discredit scientific findings, attacks on cultural diversity, the oppression of women and the massive displacement of populations.

She further highlighted the need for concerted strategies in the framework of multilateralism to face these challenges, noting the collectively spirit that underpinned the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.

The new Director-General also spoke of the financial and political difficulties of the Organization stressing that it is more necessary than ever to support, strengthen and reform and be committed to UNESCO.

Ms Azoulay is the 11th Director-General of UNESCO and the second woman to occupy the position.

Ms. Azoulay’s nomination was presented to the General Conference following an interview and election process conducted by the 58 members of UNESCO’s Executive Board. Kenya is a Member of the Executive Board for the period 2015 to 2019.

Kenya also made a significant contribution to the election of Audrey Azoulay as the new Director-General of UNESCO, having been designated by the 195-Member General Conference as a teller oversee and assure the voting process. Kenya was represented by Mr. Victor Soo of the Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO.
Ms. Audrey Azoulay addressed the 39th General Conference of UNESCO.

Ms. Irina Bokova, out-going Director-General (left) and Ms. Audrey Azoulay, in-coming Director-General.
6. SIDE EVENTS/MEETINGS HELD DURING THE 39TH SESSION OF THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE

1. THE HIGH-LEVEL MINISTERIAL PANEL DISCUSSION ON SDG 4 – EDUCATION 2030, 1ST NOVEMBER 2017

The High-Level Ministerial Panel Event on SDG4-Education 2030, was held on 1st November 2017 at the UNESCO Headquarters, at the sidelines of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

The event was organized by the secretariat of the global multi-stakeholder SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and was aimed at reviewing national experiences in strengthening governance and accountability systems, and further understanding the opportunities and challenges arising from this effort for the effective realization of SDG4-Education 2030 commitments.

The event also explored the different processes, mechanisms or instruments established by governments to promote accountability and transparency, including through more rigorous public monitoring and reporting. It examined how greater accountability can improve both domestic and international financing for education, hence contributing to the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda.

The event was officially opened by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova who reaffirmed that education is a fundamental human right, one that is key to knowledge societies, and which fosters innovation and inclusive growth. Also present at the opening panel was Mr Jean-Michel Blanquer, Minister of Education of France, Mr Dankert Vedeler, co-chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and Mr Manos Antoninis, the Director of the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report.

Kenya was represented in the meeting by Dr. Lydia Nzomo, Chairperson, Teachers Service Commission and Dr. Evangeline Njoka, Secretary General of the Kenya National Commission to UNESCO.

The meeting was divided in to two panels: first thematic panel discussed the multitude of approaches and policy measures to promote accountability in education and the second panel discussed accountability with regards to the financing of education.

The following key issues are to be highlighted from the discussions:

- The meeting highlighted the need to ground any discussion on accountability in the principles of education as a human right and a public good. While all educational stakeholders – including the private and social sectors, international organizations, donors, etc. – need to be transparent and accountable for their actions in education, the main responsibility lies with the State.
The right to information is essential to strengthening accountability, and constitutes a corollary of the right to education. A fundamental element of accountability is trust. Trust-based accountability requires a culture of trust and trust-building.

Inclusive participation of diverse stakeholders: This implies citizen participation in education policy dialogue, implementation and oversight.

Wide-ranging instruments for accountability: Measures to ensure greater accountability in education encompass a wide range of instruments. These run from legislative measures, to large-scale tests, school inspections, and parental and school community participation in the overall evaluation of education policies. Most countries have elaborated education sector plans and key performance indicators that allow for audits.

Accountability and Strategic Planning: A number of countries stressed that accountability is at the heart of strategic planning. A number of countries underscored the need for capacity building and international assistance in indicator development, data collection, analysis and utilization, and to build more integrated Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) required for Education 2030.

Beyond learning assessment: Accountability mechanisms must pay due attention to the multidimensionality of educational outcomes such as the emotional well-being of individual learners, as well as collective outcomes, such as social cohesion. This requires more and better public information for citizens on the goals of education policy and the strategies and programmes implemented to achieve them. It also requires greater investment in research, knowledge generation and knowledge sharing.

Meeting financing commitments: Adequate financing of education, both domestic and international, was highlighted as key to achieving the Education 2030 targets and commitments. Yet, it was noted with concern that many countries do not meet the international benchmarks for levels of domestic financing and international aid to education has been falling.

Mutual accountability in the financing of education: There is a need for mutual accountability in the financing of education, particularly at a time when international aid to education is falling. Donors should ensure that their allocations are equitably targeted and that aid to education goes to where it is needed most.

During the meeting, Kenya also shared its experiences notably regarding the alignment of its education system to SDG4 through the development of the Education Sector Plan for 2018-2022. Kenya also welcomed the work of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and called on education stakeholders, guided by the Education 2030 Framework for Action to increase their support for African countries.
2. EXHIBITION - LET ME BE MYSELF – THE LIFE STORY OF ANNE FRANK, 31ST OCTOBER 2017

UNESCO, the Delegation of the Netherlands to UNESCO and the Anne Frank House presented the exhibition “Let Me Be Myself – The Life Story of Anne Frank” to UNESCO Headquarters during the 39th session of the General Conference. The exhibition highlights the life of Anne Frank from her childhood, life in hiding during the Holocaust, until her death at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The exhibition connects her life story to modern experiences of discrimination and exclusion, based on interviews with youths with diverse backgrounds and identities.

The exhibition was held in UNESCO headquarters from 31 October to 4 November 2017. It was inaugurated on the 31 October with a reception where the meaning of ‘let me be myself’ that Anne Frank wrote in her diary cramped in her hiding place was explained as her desire to take her rightful place in the world and have a right to a meaning and fulfilling existence like every human being has a right to.

Since its world premiere in 2015 in Canberra, Australia the Anne Frank House’s exhibition “Let Me Be Myself – The Life Story of Anne Frank” has been on display in 80 countries where over 10 million people have attended.

On large picture panels, the exhibition presents the life of Anne Frank from her birth in 1929 to her death in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945 and relates her personal life story to the historical context of Hitler’s rise to power, World War II and the persecution of the Jews. One third of the exhibition is dedicated to contemporary stories of discrimination and exclusion, giving the voice to youths from various backgrounds and with diverse identities. Who explain how they are confronted with prejudices and exclusion and how they deal with them.

Through photos and interviews, the visitors learn about how these young people see themselves, how they are viewed by society and what role prejudices play in their daily lives. Many of the trained guide for the exhibition are students themselves that do the guided tours. They are trained on how to ask questions related to the photos to make the participants think about the meaning of the story of Anne Frank within the context of their lives.

The exhibition is part of the UNESCO General Conference inter-sectoral side event on the prevention of violent extremism, which took place on 3 November 2017.

The exhibition also has to do with the UNESCO Global Citizenship Education (GCED) which aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. It also

Anne Frank, Exhibition Photo
nurtures respect for all, building a sense of belonging to a common humanity and helping learners become responsible and active global citizens.

3. MEETING OF H.E. PROF. GEORGE I. GODIA, AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KENYA TO UNESCO WITH DR. BJORN HAUGSTAD, VICE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH OF NORWAY, 01 NOVEMBER 2017

The meeting was requested by the Permanent Delegation of Norway to UNESCO on the sidelines of the 39th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

The following were present at the meeting:

1. H.E. Prof. George Godia, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNESCO
2. Dr. Bjorn Haugstad, Vice-Minister of Education and Research of Norway
3. Mrs Grethe Sofie Bratlie, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Norway to UNESCO
4. Dr. Evangeline Njoka, Secretary General, KNATCOM
5. Mr. Joakim Bakke, Deputy Director-General, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research
7. Mr. Victor Soo, Senior Research Assistant – Education, Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO

From the outset, Ambassador Godia appreciated the organization of the meeting and highlighted Norway’s engagement, notably in the area of education and the collaboration with Kenya, notably in the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

Dr. Haugstad, congratulated Ambassador Godia for his election as Chairperson of the Education Commission of the 39th session of the General Conference. He wished Ambassador Godia all the best in chairing the commission while noting that Norway would provide full support for his effective leadership.

The following key issues were discussed in the meeting:

- **SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC):** The Vice-Ministers reiterated Norway’s continued support for the implementation of the SDG4 agenda, notably through chairing of the SDGG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) in which Kenya is a member.

- **Global Convention for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications:** Dr. Haugstad noted that one of the key agenda items to be discussed by the Education Commission was progress on the Global Convention for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications. The Vice-Minister highlighted that this is an area that Norway supports and has provided financial support to UNESCO and is planning to provide more financial support, should the Education Commission endorse the programme report. Ambassador Godia highlighted that Global Convention can play an important role in strengthening the ratification of the Regional Conventions, notably in the African Context. The Ambassador mentioned that the Africa Group was in support of the development of the Global Convention on Higher Education.

- **The Economic situation of the Organization:** Both Ambassador Godia and Dr. Haugstad agreed that the current economic situation of the organization was a key concern and there was need to send a strong message that Member States need to honor the payment of their agreed assessed contributions.

- **Support for the Pan-African High-level Meeting on SDG4:** Ambassador Godia informed Dr. Haugstad of the organization of the Pan-African High-Level Meeting on SDG4 and invited Norway to support, both financially and in kind the organization of this important meeting given Norway’s support for the implementation of SDG4. The Ambassador also invited the Vice-Minister to attend the meeting. Dr. Haugstad welcomed the organization of this important meeting and requested the invitation of support and attendance to be sent to his attention for follow up.

- **Education Commission:** While congratulating Ambassador Godia for his chairmanship of the Education Commission, the Vice-Minister requested whether Norway could be noted as the first speaker on the first debate of the Education Commission that would focus on UNESCO’s Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39C/5) and UNESCO’s role in the implementation of SDG4, as the Vice-Minister would be expected to read
Norway’s plenary debate statement later in the morning. Ambassador Godia agreed to facilitate Norway, and requested Mr. Victor Soo, Senior Research Assistant to follow up the request.

The meeting was adjourned at around 11.45am.

4. BILATERAL MEETING WITH MR GUSTAV FRIDOLIN, MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF SWEDEN, 1 NOVEMBER 2017

H.E. Amb. Prof. George Godia, Head of Delegation of the Republic of Kenya during the 39th Session of General Conference, met with Mr. Gustav Fridolin, Minister of Education of Sweden on the margins of the General Conference to discuss how Kenya and Sweden could foster collaboration particularly within UNESCO’s areas of competence.

Amb. Godia appreciated the support provided by Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in making good quality HIV and sexuality education available to young people. He noted the importance of the programme in supporting Member States achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He further appreciated the focus that Sweden had placed on the Eastern and Southern African region recalling that Kenya is one of the beneficiaries of the project.

Amb. Godia also informed that UNESCO, the Africa Union and the Government of Kenya are organization a Pan-African High level Meeting on SDG4 which will be aimed at building up on all the sub-regional consultations held in Africa, discuss SDG4 implementation after 2 years.
and develop an agreed SDG4 Coordination and Monitoring mechanism for Africa. The meeting is planned to be held on 14-16 March 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya.

This will be a key meeting as it will also create a platform for aligning SDG4-Education 2030 Framework of Action to the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA, 16-25). Thus initiate the much needed collaboration between UNESCO and the Africa Union.

This will also be the first Pan African Meeting on SDG4 after the adoption of the SDG’s and will focus on all key themes within SDG4. Amb. Godia f extended an invitation to the Swedish Minister to attend the Meeting. He also called on Sweden to consider supporting the Meeting, financially and/or in kind.

Mr. Gustav Fridolin, Minister of Education of Sweden, thanked the Ambassador for the invitation to the Pan-African High level Meeting on SDG4 noting the importance of Education in the achievement of SDGs. He also noted some Sweden’s priority areas in UNESCO which include sexuality education, freedom of expression, safety of journalist and strengthening reforms within UNESCO.

In concluding the meeting, Amb. Godia and the Mr. Fridolin noted the need to strengthen the close cooperation between Kenya and Sweden. It was noted that both Kenya and Sweden were candidates for election to the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), hence the need for reciprocal support.
5. AWARD CEREMONY OF THE 2017 UNESCO-JAPAN PRIZE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD), 3RD NOVEMBER 2017

The three winners of the 2017 UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) received their awards at a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, on 3 November. They were awarded the prize in recognition of their innovative projects at the local, regional and international level.

This was the third edition of the prize, funded by the Government of Japan and created in 2014 to honour outstanding projects and programmes in the field of ESD. The three laureates for 2017 are: the social enterprise Zikra from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; the Hard Rain Project from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and Sihlengeni Primary School from the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, presented the award, saying “The Sustainable Development Goals mark strong recognition by the international community that countries need ESD to make the transition to green societies” Each laureate received a diploma, an award and US $50,000.

Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Yoshimasa Hayashi congratulated the winners, and encouraged their future efforts: “Receiving the award is the start of a journey rather than the finish line. I look forward to the varied efforts by laureates leading to further progress on ESD and greater quality of education around the world.”
The future is bright!

Sihlengeni Primary School in Zimbabwe won its award for its “Permaculture” programme which implements ESD through a whole-institution approach, providing learners with life skills while reducing land degradation and deforestation. “The future is bright for our Green Oasis of Zimbabwe!” exclaimed Headteacher Sibanga Ncube accepting the prize on behalf of the school. He added that winning the prize had boosted motivation for the future ESD work of his school as well as adjacent communities,

Zikra won the prize for its “Popular Learning Programme” which promotes equity between rural and urban communities through ‘exchange tourism’. Representing the social enterprise, co-founder Lama Kathieb said: “Our work has been dedicated to rediscovering local knowledge and employ it in fabricating solutions to community’s current struggles. We thank the UNESCO and the government of Japan for awarding us with this great prize.”

The Hard Rain Project was rewarded for its international exhibition projects “Hard Rain” and “Whole Earth?” which bring arts and science together to reach a large audience of citizens and leaders. Founder Mark Edwards said: “Education is a key element in the transition to a sustainable society, yet it’s often these projects that are hardest to fund. Thanks to the prize we can start work on our next exhibition that will showcase the Sustainable Development Goals.”

In addition to the award, the three winning organizations will be invited to become key partners of the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP), driving the GAP implementation forward in close collaboration with UNESCO.

The call for nominations for the fourth edition of the prize will be launched in January 2018.

6. WATER RELATED MEETINGS

The delegates from the water sector had various side meetings with UNESCO–IHP Division, Kenya-UNESCO Permanent Delegation office and the office in-charge of UNESCO Ambassadors of good will and special envoys. The meetings were on the current programme between the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Kenya in collaboration with UNESCO-IHP.

The outcomes of the side meetings are as follows:

1. Kilimanjaro Aquifer mapping programme:

The programme titled “The Kilimanjaro Transboundary Aquifer System: advancing knowledge, transboundary cooperation and conjunctive surface and groundwater management” was initiated by UNESCO-IHP groundwater section with an aim of improving water security and environmental sustainability in the Mt Kilimanjaro transboundary region threatened by growing pressures from demographic growth and climate change, through a better understanding of the groundwater resources, the adoption of conjunctive surface and groundwater management approaches and the strengthening of transboundary cooperation.
Project identification framework (PIF) document was drafted and shared with Kenya and Tanzania water sector for their input. The proposed funding Agency is Global Environmental Facility (GEF). So far the process is in progress and it was agreed in the meeting that UNESCO-IHP groundwater section to liaise with Tanzania and Kenya UNESCO permanent delegation offices to bring all the stakeholders on board.

II. Mt Elgon groundwater mapping:

Kenya and Uganda intend to collaborate in assessing Mt Elgon transboundary water resources. The initiative will be done under UNESCO-IHP who also mentioned that Elgon is a Biosphere Reserve and they wanted this factor to weigh in towards the transboundary project. The involved stakeholders agreed to start off the process by sharing the current status of the information on the aquifer.

III. The Water Information Network System (WINS):

The UNESCO-International Hydrological Programme launched Water Information Network System (WINS) during a meeting held on 31st January, 2017. WINS Programme is an open source and open access platform that combines geolocalized data. It was developed by the UNESCO-IHP to serve as a global reference in the design and support of operations, management and decision making to support functions for sound water resources governance. The Ministry has nominated 3 officers to act as focal point in data entry into the system.

In the discussions on this programme, UNESCO-IHP clarified that in their request letter sent to Member States they required three focal points, one as manager and two as assistants. It was agreed Kenya to resend their nominations as per requirements.

IV. Kenya Progress on Monitoring and Reporting of SDG 6:

The 2030 Agenda finds Kenya at vantage point as it builds on the lessons learnt and foundations laid by the MDGs. Further to this, the SDGs agenda was adopted while Kenya is implementing its long-term economic development blueprint for accelerating transformation of the country into a rapidly industrializing middle-income nation by the year 2030. A closer look indicates that the Kenya Vision 2030 is well aligned to the global development framework and its implementation is directly linked towards achieving the SDGs. The time frame of the Kenya Vision coincides with the timeframe for the SDGs.

To monitor and report on SDG 6, in Kenya, the water sector has established national institutional framework comprising of appointment of focal persons for each indicator and establishment of National Steering committee. Likewise several fora’s has been created for stakeholder engagements and report dissemination namely Kenya Water Week, annual progress reporting (MWI, WASREB, WRA) Swap among others. The mechanism of reporting is through a pre-prepared template.

During the meeting with UNESCO-IHP officials, the water delegates mentioned on the water sector progress on reporting of SDG 6 “Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for all” UNESCO-IHP who are mandated on reporting the
implementation of indicator 6.5.2 globally, informed the Kenyan delegates that there is a proposal on reviewing the template for reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and a meeting scheduled in Budapest, 16-17 January 2018. It was agreed that UNESCO-IHP extended the invitation on the same to the IHP Kenya focal person.

V. UNESCO Special Envoy:

Ms. Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General, appointed His Excellency Mr. Mwai Kibaki, the 3rd President of the Republic of Kenya, as UNESCO’s Special Envoy for Water in Africa for a 2 years term. This was in recognition of His Excellency’s strong commitment to development. His main mission as special envoy is to raise awareness about UNESCO’s initiatives that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal N° 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The 2 years term contract is coming to an end and H E has expressed interest to continue working with UNESCO in the same capacity.

The Water Sector delegates, Representatives of Kenya – UNESCO Permanent delegation in charge of Natural Sciences, UNESCO-IHP and the officer in-charge of UNESCO goodwill ambassadors and Special Envoy had a side meeting to follow on the reporting progress and renewing Special Envoy term which is coming to an end in April 2018.

Reporting progress: The delegates were advised that: Reporting should be done through the office of UNESCO goodwill ambassadors and Special Envoy. Details of the activities, programmes and high resolution photos can be uploaded on the UNESCO official website and captured in the UNESCO monthly letters.

Special Envoy term renewal: Mr. Fuad Pashayev, who is from the programme of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors and Special Envoy said that HE Mwai Kibaki is an important person for UNESCO as he raises the organization’s visibility due to his stature and would welcome the extension of his mandate noting that Ms. Irina Bokova has mentioned him several times in her speeches. He advised that HE. Mwai Kibaki send a letter of congratulations to the new Director General in his capacity of UNESCO Special Envoy and also express his interest to renew his term.

VI. Water for schools Programme.

The Ministry of water and Irrigation has initiated a programme titled “Maji Safi Elimu Bora Project” (Clean Water, Better Education Project) whose objective is to increase access to safe water and sanitation. The project is also intend to increase sustainable water supply for enhanced health, clean living environment and poverty alleviation. The Cabinet Secretary in charge of Water affairs through a letter ref. MWI/UN/11/9 Vol. IV had requested UNESCO support in the implementation of the project.

The water delegation met with the officer in-charge of the programme at UNESCO headquarters for follow-up. He informed the delegates that a project in Cameroon on teaching about water to children and teachers and that can be emulated in Kenya. He gave the team a book titled ‘Leçons d’eau, 3 générations à l’école des sciences appliquées’ (Water lessons 3
generations in the school of applied science), he mentioned that the book is only in French for now and will be translated into English in due course.

Discussion outcome: it was agreed that the ministry to liaise with UNESCO Regional Hydrologist, Nairobi office and identify gaps and appropriate approach for the programme. The report should be shared with UNESCO for implementation.

VII. 8th World Water Forum:

The World Water Forum is the world’s biggest water-related event and is organized by the World Water Council (WWC), an international organization that brings together all those interested in the theme of water. Its mission is “to promote awareness, build political commitment and trigger action on critical water issues at all levels, to facilitate the efficient conservation, protection, development, planning, management and use of water in all its dimensions on an environmentally sustainable basis for the benefit of all life on Earth”.

The Forum’s contents are defined and implemented by five distinct commissions responsible, respectively, for:

1. the **Thematic Process**, which discusses which themes the Forum will address;

2. the **Political Process**, which involves local, regional, national, and national governing bodies and parliamentarians, and has resulted in memoranda of understandings, cooperation treaties and agreements for the integrated water resource management;

3. the **Regional Process**, which discusses various problems and guidelines for cooperation and integrated water management on each continent or geographic region;

4. the **Sustainability Focus Group**, which discusses the adherence of public policies and actions to the principals of sustainable (economic, social and environmental) development in a cross-cutting perspective, participating in all the other processes; and

5. the **Citizens’ Forum**, which stimulates the participation of organized civil society in the discussions, exchanges of experience and all the Forum’s other activities.

The World Water Council organizes the Forum every three years together with the respective host country and city. To date, there have been seven editions of the World Water Forum, in different countries, on four different continents. In 2014, Brazil’s candidature to host the event was successful and Brasilia was selected as the host-city for the event. Accordingly, on **18th to 23rd 2018**, Brazil will be hosting the 8th edition of the World Water Forum. It will be the first time the event is held in the Southern Hemisphere.

Kenya through the Ministry of Water and Irrigation participated in the two Ministerial Process preparatory Committee Meetings (PrepComs), geared toward preparation of the 7th World Water Forum in 2014. The two meetings were held at UNESCO’s headquarters, in Paris, France. The objective of the PrepComms is to prepare a Ministerial Declaration and Ministerial
Roundtables for the Forum which provide consensus-based view of governments concerning water related issues for the future to contribute to other major intergovernmental processes.

Delegates from Water sector led by Prof. Judi Wakhungu- former Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources participated in the 7th World Water Forum held on 12-17th April, 2014 in Daegu and Gyeongbuk, Korea.

The water delegates briefed the Kenya-UNESCO Permanent Delegation Ambassador, Prof. George Godia on the aforementioned information about the world water forum and requested his office to extend invitation to the Ministry representatives in the participation of Ministerial Process preparatory Committee Meetings (PrepComs).

7. ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14: THE OCEAN WE NEED FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT, 2ND NOVEMBER 2017

The Side event entitled “Achieving Sustainable Development 14: The Ocean We Need for the Future We Want”, provided an opportunity to exchange on the nature, scope and modalities of developing and implementing the UN Decade of Ocean Science as a key contribution to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.

The ten-year cooperative programme on ocean science to support effective ocean management, stewardship and sustainable development, would notably aim to:

- Stimulate a global partnership on the marine science requirements needed to support implementation of Agenda 2030;
- Understand the impacts of cumulative stressors and seek sustainable solutions for sustaining benefits from the ocean;
- Build on the findings of IOC’s Global Ocean Science Report, share knowledge and enhance interdisciplinary marine research capacities through the transfer of marine technology, leading to economic benefits for all Member States, particularly for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries;
- Gain a better quantitative knowledge of ocean ecosystems and their contribution to society, through the whole ocean column from the surface to the bottom;
- Map the ocean floor and its resources to support their sustainable management.

UNESCO Director-General, Ms. Irina Bokova and Ambassador Peter Thomson, in his capacity as newly appointed UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, informed of their support to the call a United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030): The Ocean We Need for the Future We Want.

It was highlighted that it is only through scientific research and cooperation that we will be able to fill the knowledge gaps that hinder us from understanding the impacts of climate change, marine pollution and biodiversity loss on the ocean, and seek sustainable solutions for its protection.

The well-being of every citizen, every society, every country, landlocked or coastal, depends on the health of the ocean. To ensure its protection and sustainable management, the
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO will galvanize efforts for its proposed United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The Decade is expected to further the contribution of ocean and scientific-based knowledge in support of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its SDG 14.

8. COMMONWEALTH GROUP BRIEFING ON THE 20TH CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS (20CCEM), 8TH NOVEMBER 2017

The Commonwealth Group at UNESCO on 8th November 2017, held a briefing on the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM) for delegates attending the 39th Session of UNESCO’s General Conference. A presentation of the 20CCEM was delivered by Mr. Nasir Kazmi, the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Education Adviser.

Held every three years, the Conference of Commonwealth Ministers (CCEM) is a high-level meeting that brings together education ministers from the fifty-two Commonwealth countries to discuss key issues and engage in dialogue on education. The 20CCEM will be held in Nadi, Fiji, from 19th to 23rd February 2018 under the theme: “Sustainability and Resilience: Can Education Deliver?” and one of its main objectives will be to address and define mechanisms through which education systems across the Commonwealth can enable sustainable development and address the major global challenges, such as climate change.

As the first Conference of Commonwealth Ministers to take place after the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the 20CCEM also aims to support and promote member states’ commitment towards the attainment of inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
9. UNESCO’S GLOBAL OBSERVATORY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY INSTRUMENTS (GO-SPIN), 7TH NOVEMBER 2017

The latest results of the Global Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instruments (GO-SPIN) were presented to Member States on 7 November 2017, in a side event to UNESCO’s General Conference. Over 80 delegates participated in the event.

Ms Flavia Schlegel, Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences opened the side event, by expressing special thanks to the Swedish Government and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), for the valuable contribution that allows the implementation of the GOSPIN programme. She thanked the panellists for their presence and all the Member States that have expressed their interest in undertaking a GO-SPIN assessment, especially Botswana, Guatemala, Israel, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malawi, Rwanda and Zimbabwe, which already implemented GO-SPIN.

GO-SPIN was presented as UNESCO response to lack of accurate information, adequate indicators and capacities on STI policy governance. Therefore, UNESCO develops this tool as a means to inform and guide policy-makers in the vital role of STI policy in the 2030 Agenda. Ms Schlegel highlighted synergies built across UNESCO programmes, referring to GO-SPIN and SAGA (STEM and Gender Advancement), where information on policies and indicators related to the gender imbalance in STEM are shared, thus strengthening the impact of both these programmes.
Keynote address on Guatemala

During his presentation, the representative of Guatemala, Dr Oscar Cobar Pinto, Secretary of State on Science and Technology, outlined the key findings derived from the GO-SPIN country profile. In particular, he highlighted that since the late 1970s Guatemala has strongly decreased the investments in R&D. In 2015, the share of investments in R&D was 0.029% of GDP. Also, the number of researchers was found to be low if compared to other Latin-American countries and the expenditure in higher education was 0.35% of GDP.

Dr. Cobar pointed out that Guatemala was found to have a low scientific production, with 180 scientific articles published in journals with Impact Index in 2015, and a low number of patents applications presented by local residents in the last few years. In terms of gender gap, the country profile has pointed out a good balance in the participation of women as researchers, even though Guatemala has not performed well in the Index of Gender Gap, ranking 105 out of 144.

During his presentation, Dr. Cobar also described the key steps undertaken to participate in the GO-SPIN programme and outlined the main achievements after the conclusion of the project. In particular, he claimed that after GO-SPIN, the government of Guatemala has doubled the budget allocation for R&D in 2018 and has redefined the budget priorities, giving greater importance to Scientific Research based on social demands, formation of high level human capital, innovation and technology transfer promotion and dissemination of science and technology findings.

Presentation of the new platform

The event was also the occasion to demonstrate the new GO-SPIN online platform, which will be launched publically in April 2018. After recalling the main features and historical evolution of GO-SPIN, Mr Guillermo Lemarchand, UNESCO principal consultant and GO-SPIN investigator, presented the new platform and gave a first overview of the set of information and modules on STI policies and policy instruments for nearly 50 countries in Latin America, Africa, the Arab States and Asia.

Round Table

The discussion panel was integrated by Dr Cobar, National Secretary of Science and Technology of Guatemala, where latest GO-SPIN study was published earlier this year; Prof. Francis P. Gudyanga, Permanent Secretary for Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development of Zimbabwe, the country that hosted the first-ever regional GO-SPIN workshop in 2012; Dr Mathodi Abraham from Botswana where UNESCO implemented the GO-SPIN project that resulted in the inaugural country profile published in the UNESCO series on Mapping Research and Innovation, in 2013; and Dr Tomas Kjellqvist, Vice-chair of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO. Dr Ernesto Fernandez Polcuch, Chief of the Science Policy and Partnerships Section moderated the round table discussion.

The panellists highlighted the relevance of the GO-SPIN programme, the learning outcomes throughout the implementation process and the final impact of the programme.
Regarding the relevance of GO-SPIN, Mr. Mathodi, noted that “countries need to work towards a very integrated National STI system where the policy making is tightly connected to the policy implementation”; Mr. Kjellqvist, elaborated further mentioning that GO-SPIN is a powerful tool “to get a comprehensive overview of STI systems” and “to upgrade STI systems”.

Mr Kjellqvist emphasised the critical role GO-SPIN plays at capacity building stressing that the STI system concept is complex and requires development of specialised skills on capturing, interpretation and analysing of information. On this note, the Botswana representative shared that through the GO-SPIN implementation process they learned that in their country the complementarity and harmonization of sectorial policies is critical is to build synergies and multiply the results of STI.

GO-SPIN was recognised as an impactful programme. Prof. Gudyanga, pointed that “GO-SPIN has given a framework of STI policies in Zimbabwe allowing governments to address the country’s weaknesses and empower its strengths. It can be considered a benchmarking tool to evaluate effectiveness of STI policies”, likewise he mentioned that to address the skilled human resource challenge identified in GO-SPIN, Zimbabwe created six universities with programs on STI, including a dedicated STI University at the graduate level. Dr Cobar, highlighted that “GOSPIN raised the political awareness and support for the development of STI” and emphasised that thanks to the GO-SPIN results and the credibility of the study, the Guatemalan Parliament doubled the STI budget for 2018.

**Conclusion**

UNESCO is cognizant of countries’ need for solid evidence to upon which to base decisions; effective instruments to steer development; and participatory approaches to capture insights from all relevant sectors and stakeholders. Throughout the interventions of all side event participants, GO-SPIN was recognised as a systemic approach that builds on the role of knowledge for socio-economic development and that incorporates all the needs previously mentioned, into activities that aim at improving STI governance and provides impact to the societies in which it is implemented.

**10. CRACKING THE CODE - GIRLS’ AND WOMEN’S EDUCATION IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM), 10TH NOVEMBER 2017**

Nearly one hundred participants came together for the presentation of the book entitled ‘Cracking the Code, Girls’ and Women’s education in STEM’. The event was held on the sidelines of UNESCO’s 39th session of its General Conference and on the *World Science Day for Peace and Development*. The event was organized by the UNESCO Education Sector, with the intersectoral support from the UNESCO Science Sector and supported by the Permanent Delegations of Japan, the USA and Kenya.
In her opening remarks, Ms. Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General observed that girls and women are key actors in crafting solutions to improve lives and generate inclusive, green growth that benefits us all. She noted that far too few girls are in school, and far too few of them pursue studies in STEM subjects. Even fewer go on to lead STEM careers.” Still today, girls and women around the world face steep challenges hindering their education opportunities. This is of particular concern in the fields of STEM, where girls and women are significantly under-represented. To support Member States in their efforts to advance gender equality in education, the event shared UNESCO’s latest findings on girls’ and women’s participation, achievement and continuation in STEM education.

In her address, Ms Soo-Hyang Choi, Director, Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development, enumerated the conclusions of the report informing that its objectives are to present data and information on the participation of girls in STEM, identify progress and challenges in the professional careers for girls in STEM. She noted that in the last 15 years there has been continued progress in the number of girls taking up STEM but informed that half of them go into medicine and very few are in the field of ICT. She further noted that girls in many countries have weaker results in STEM subjects than their male counterparts.

She emphasized that there are no innate differences that affect the uptake of STEM subjects but observed that socialization is a big factor as girls have a fear of testing and competition which hinders their progress in STEM. She highlighted that their own perception of their capacity is the most challenging issue in their uptake of STEM.
She noted solutions such as high quality teaching, specialization and equal opportunities in ICTs could be a remedy. She pointed out that research evidence shows that in 78 countries girls do better when there are more female teachers. She stressed the need for opportunities for experience in real world learning in order for girls to build confidence in themselves.

This cutting-edge report finds that only 35% of all students enrolled in STEM-related fields at higher education are female. In mathematics and engineering in particular, girls represent only 5% and 8% of all students, respectively. The report also finds that the potential contributions and talent of millions of women are put aside due to a variety of factors from girls’ own perceptions of their abilities to systemic and educational biases. To respond to these hindering factors, the report offers targeted actions on four levels (learner, parents and peers, school and society) to increase girls’ and women’s participation and engagement in STEM disciplines.

Genevieve Decarre, a teacher from an UNESCO Associated Schools network (ASPnet) and Amandine Clerc, her student, explained how attending the Launch of the *Cracking the Code* report in Bangkok in August 2017 had led them to realize the importance of STEM subjects for girls and women reason for which they formed a pilot committee in their school involving students, teachers and parents to have the school focus on sustainable development which has renewed the sense of purpose of schooling among the students. Clerc is now thinking of re-orienting her studies to science field.

“Listening to different perspectives and approaches was helpful in the way that we look at the scope of business,” said Executive Vice President of the CJ Group, Heekyung Jo Min, highlighting her inspiring experience from the three-day UNESCO Symposium and Policy Forum held in August 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. She further stated, “we need more of us in the private sector to engage on this issue, and to help girls’ and women’s take their rightful place in technology and engineering companies and in laboratories.” The Symposium explored gender inequalities in STEM education and shared innovative solutions empowering girls and women that could be replicated worldwide.

Looking at the way forward, participants discussed the importance of continued cooperation across all sectors to further momentum on this topic during a moderated discussion bringing together experts and partners. Relevant tools and initiatives, such as the TeachHer partnership and the UNESCO l'Oreal for Women in Science were highlighted for their key role in promoting girls and women in STEM education and careers. Teachers have a strong role in engaging girls in STEM fields. Farah Ouechtati, member of the panel and UNESCO-L'Oréal International Fellow, shared that she was inspired and encouraged to continue in sciences by her biology teacher, a woman.

In the panel debate that followed it was noted that it is important to engage students in order to have the school move towards sustainable development objectives as a way of involving students and the society at large in current the global challenges. This objective can provide schools with a mode of work or approach, this way school children can see the link between sustainable development and the sustainable development goals. It was noted that career awareness should be enhanced in schools and that even small-scale experiments can help to
break up stereotypes. Mentorship was also discussed, it was observed that if teachers are more conscious of the importance of mentorship they would take it more seriously.

Anathea Brooks, the Gender Focal Point in Sciences unit of UNESCO, talked about the SAGA programme that has been developed by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics to measure the extent to which gender equality education is being implemented in Member and what are the gaps that need to be addressed. Other panellists included, Chris Hegadorn, the Charge d’Affaires of the USA.

Participants were finally invited to join UNESCO in its efforts to help #GirlsCrackTheCode.

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11. SCREENING OF A FILM BY ZEINAB BADAWI (JOURNALIST, BBC) BASED ON THE GENERAL HISTORY OF AFRICA, 10TH NOVEMBER 2017

Background. UNESCO launched the elaboration of the General History of Africa in 1964. After 35 years of cooperation between over 230 historians and other specialists overseen by an International Scientific Committee, eight volumes were published, they have been translated into 13 languages.

A series of 9 films on the General History of Africa directed by Ms Zeinab Badawi and funded by the OCP Group, a Moroccan state-owned company, has been broadcasted on BBC World during July and August 2017. It is a part of this series that was watched on 11th November on the occasion of the 39th General Assembly. The documentary is on Africa’s history told by Africans themselves.
Zeinab Badawi presented the documentary on the General History of Africa in collaboration with UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences Sector, Africa Department and Department of Public Information in close cooperation with the African Group of Member States and Kush Productions.

After the documentary a few participants took the floor and thanked the facilitators for the good quality work that shows the rich African cultural heritage. One said that it would have been important to include oral African tradition such as Ahmadou Ambata Ba, Cheikh Anta Diop, Timbuktu and the empires of Zimbabwe, Ghana and Mali.

To this Zeinab answered that only a small part of 9 hours of film had been seen and that in their filming work they had reached only as far as the 13th Century and will cover the rest of the African history in the next episode of the filming.

Replying to a question on if the documentary would be subtitled in French for the French speaking audience she replied that subtitling will be done in six more languages including Arabic, Swahili and Amharic (the documentary watched had English subtitles).

One delegate spoke of the problematization aspect of the work and asked about the aim of the documentary, what do we want to do with such a film on Africa, ‘is it only touristic sort of material?’. He therefore emphasized on epistemology and urged the need to avoid having a film full of incongruities and without much benefit to Africans.

A delegate who identified himself as an actor and producer in théâtre de l’ère nouveau in Paris observed that Africans who live in the diaspora suffer from a lack of Africanness (African culture). He noted that this Africanness is especially important for the young generation of Africans in the diaspora because ‘we have learnt nothing from ourselves’ and therefore urged for the establishment of a parallel school of African culture.

To these Zeinab answered that the documentary on General African History is a television programme meant to act as a catalyst to excite a lot of people’s interest in the diaspora and older African diasporas such as those living in USA, Brazil etc.

The Moroccan ambassador congratulated the documentary film team on the excellent lighting and technical aspect. Ms. Badawi informed that they had made exclusive use of African camera men.
7. ANNEX

KENYA NATIONAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. PROF. GEORGE GODIA, CBS AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KENYA TO UNESCO AND LEADER OF DELEGATION DURING THE 39TH UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE ON 1ST NOVEMBER, 2017, PARIS, FRANCE

President of the General Conference,

President of the Executive Board,

UNESCO Director General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate you Madam President on your election as the President of the 39th General Conference of UNESCO. On behalf of the Kenyan delegation please accept our best wishes for a successful General Conference.

I also congratulate Mrs. Irina Bokova, the outgoing Director General for successfully steering UNESCO to achieve tremendous reforms, during her tenure of office despite the challenges encountered. Kenya wishes you the best in all your future endeavours.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In line with SDG 4, Kenya has initiated basic education curriculum reforms which will enable learners to become engaged, empowered and ethical citizens. This curriculum has been piloted and will be rolled out in the early grade levels from next year, 2018. In addition, the Ministry of Education National Sector Education Plan has been reviewed with the support from the UNESCO, in collaboration with IIEP.

We welcome UNESCO’s commitment to supporting African countries through building capacities in the integration, coordination and monitoring of SDG4 on Education.

Kenya is pleased to collaborate with UNESCO and the Africa Union towards the organization the 1st Pan-African High-level Meeting on SDG4 in March 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting will review Africa’s progress and challenges faced in the implementation of SDG 4.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The last few years have registered a tremendous growth in access to University Education. The number of Public Universities and Constituent Colleges increased from 7 in 2012, to 30 fully fledged Universities and 5 Constituent Colleges in 2017.

Kenya’s Vision 2030 has placed emphasis on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Consequently, there has been increase in the number of Technical Training Institutions. The enrolment in Technical and Vocational Colleges has almost doubled from about 55,000 in 2015 to over 100,000 in 2016.
To address inclusivity, Kenya carried out a national survey in 2016 on children with sensory and physical disabilities in order to improve planning for children with special needs. In addition, there has been an increase in transition from lower levels of education to higher levels among children with special needs.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In a bid to improve Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) uptake in Kenya, 94 STEM Model schools have been established around the country. So far about 1000 secondary school girls have been mentored in STEM and 150 teachers sensitized on gender responsive pedagogy. We thank the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, for supporting Scientific Camps of Excellence for Girls in Kenya.

We further appreciate the TeachHer Public-Private Partnership through which the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts/Design, Mathematics (STEAM) programme which was launched in July 2017 when Kenya hosted the 2nd TeachHer Regional Training for Africa.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Government of Kenya recognizes freshwater as an important resource for mankind. It has therefore, embarked on assessing the country’s groundwater potential in partnership with UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, in Nairobi.

Kenya is also working towards establishing a Geopark in Baringo County which is likely to be the first Geopark in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Government thanks UNESCO for the technical support received this far and looks forward to continued collaboration.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Kenya has in place a National Policy on Culture through which it seeks to realize her dreams and aspirations as captured in its Constitution. In the past two years, the Government together with and relevant stakeholders has developed two Policy frameworks for the promotion of culture and creative industries and for sustainable development of world heritage properties, in line with the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Kenya is collaborating with UNESCO to implement a project that aims to document and digitally archive traditional games in Kenya in view of their inclusion in a Digital Library on Traditional Games around the World. Local communities and other stakeholders will benefit from capacity building workshops on digital archiving as well as intercultural dialogue and exchange.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Kenya introduced the world to Mobile Money, *The M-Pesa*. With the launch of M-Akiba, early this year, Kenya once again became the first country in the world to offer a mobile platform for citizens to trade in government securities. M-Akiba is a Government of Kenya issued retail bond built upon mobile money platforms.
In addition, the Government launched the Ajira Digital Programme in November 2016 to help address youth unemployment by empowering and enabling them to earn an income. The programme introduces young people to online work and provides them with the necessary tools, training and mentorship to enable them to work and earn a decent income from digital platforms.

In conclusion, Kenya remains committed to supporting UNESCO in the promotion of education, sciences, culture and communication and information with a view to realizing the SDGs and other globally agreed goals thus contributing to sustainable social and human development.

Thank you.