



## **Minutes of Meeting #7 of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee – 30 January 2020**

### **NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee**

1. Marie-Claude Machon Honoré - Chairperson
2. Philippe Beaussant - Vice Chairperson
3. Richard Francis Apeh - Secretary
4. Marie-Christine Gries - Treasurer
5. Fatima Lahnait – Forums and International days
6. Diego Gradis – NGO Partnership

### **By Skype**

1. Andrey Cheshev - Focal point Eastern Europe Region (for part of the meeting)

### **Excused**

1. Abdel-Basset Ben Hassan – Focal point Arab region
2. Ratna Wagh – Focal point Asia region
3. Daves Guzha – Focal Point Africa Region

### **Observers**

1. Jean-Yves Le Saux - Director BSP (for part of the meeting)
2. Sabina Colombo - Chief of Unit for Civil Society Partnerships
3. Armin Ibrsimovic - Unit for Civil Society Partnerships

### **Opening Remarks by Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux – Director Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP)**

Mr Jean Yves Le Saux expresses his gratitude and pleasure for joining the meeting. He emphasizes the important role of the Liaison Committee (LC), reiterating the Director General's wishes to see an opening of UNESCO to the outside world; amongst other topics, through the analysis of what are the emerging challenges, such as the growing inequalities, the climate change crisis, migration, hate speech, violent extremism, etc

The existence of NGOs is necessary for the Organization to function efficiently and to reach its objectives, and to mention many examples of excellent cooperation He also states that even at governmental levels today, NGOs no longer play just an advisory role, they are at the decision table, and they are consulted.

The NGOs must contribute. UNESCO is looking to NGOs to participate in the consultation on the next Medium-term strategy and budget (C4), as well as the C5. The Secretariat will send NGOs a questionnaire in this regard and in addition, it will include broader questions to collect input on the specific priorities and transversal issues that are of interest to the NGOs.

He is looking up to the NGOs to participate in the process, to tell UNESCO where they are wrong, or missing out on some areas or opportunities. For example, on Youth; If or not the modalities of engagement with NGO is still effective; the impact of each specific program of UNESCO.

**Marie-Claude Machon** thanks Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux for his opening remarks mentioning that his presence was particularly essential at a critical time for UNESCO and its partners.

She reminds the participants of various important steps such as the report of the APX Commission (PT 6.2 on the strategic transformation of UNESCO) at the last General Conference, also that the Executive board in its 207<sup>th</sup> session recognised the LC for its constructive contribution to improve the dialogue between Member States and NGOs, and invites the LC to pursue its efforts to strengthen the dialogue, including in appropriate spaces like the ICNGO and NGO Forums.

Ms Machon mentions the questionnaire which was launched on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in which 92% of Member States who answered, showed interest in a dialogue with NGOs in the context of the ICNGO. She also pointed to a problem of communication and visibility, as 33 Member States out of 56 had never heard about the LC.

She refers to the LC decision to draft Rules of proceedings and a Code of conduct for the members of the LC, so as to improve the functioning of the Committee.

### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

Approved. Was shared with Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux the reality that for the non-Paris based members of the LC there can exist difficulties to connect and participate in LC meetings by Skype. Mr. Jean-Yves Le Saux expresses that he is aware of that and will look at how UNESCO could help mitigating the problem.

### **2. Adoption of the minutes for meetings #5 and #6**

Diego Gradis mentions that because the #6 meeting started late, he could only be present for the first 15 minutes.

### **3. Appointment of a Rapporteur for the meeting**

Richard Apeh, Secretary of the LC, will draft the minutes of the meeting

### **4. Reflexion on the Liaison Committee's functioning**

A. Draft #2 of Rules of proceedings and of a Code of conduct reviewed by the President and two LC members at an in-line workshop are circulated. A workshop composed of Diego, Cyril, Marie-Christine, Fatima, Andrey and Richard will further elaborate this proposal. Drafts #3 will be submitted for approval at the next meeting of the LC.

B. Andrey Cheshev will discuss specific technical points with regards to a platform of discussion which was developed in view of the next Forum on Global Citizenship.

### **5. Document on the strengthening of the Dialogue between NGOs and Member States**

The working group on Partnership asks the LC to consider soliciting the Secretariat to pass on to the Permanent Delegations the position of the NGOs expressed in the approved Document on the Strengthening of the Dialogue between NGPs and Member States.

Mr. Jean-Yves Le Saux expresses interest in the topic He indicates that the Secretariat will review the document to check that it is in line with relevant rules and procedures, and will consider, then, whether to pass it on to the members of the Executive Board.

After receiving the comments from the Secretariat, the LC will, in coordination with the Working Group, decide how to proceed further. The working group will be kept informed of this decision.

### **6. Guide for International NGO Forums**

The working group on Partnership suggests that a workshop be held with the LC and the Secretariat to review the adopted Guide for International Forums.

Mr. Jean-Yves Le Saux supports this idea. He also expresses the necessary intellectual control and assessment the Secretariat must retain on activities it is officially part of, such as the Forums.

The next LC meeting will review possible changes in the document which may have come out of the workshop.

### **7. Mid-term information plenary meeting for the NGOs**

**Date:** 26 February 2020

**Venue:** Salle IX, UNESCO headquarters

**Format:** an information meeting with each member of the LC feeding back the NGOs on the achievements in his/her field. The floor will then be open to the participants. If the budget allows, a drink will follow the meeting, although costs have substantially risen.

### **8. Forums**

#### **A. Forum on Inequalities - December 2019**

Outcome of the forum will be sent to all registered participants to red flag any major objection. It will then be circulated among the NGO list and published on the website of the LC. Speeches and discussion will be collated and published.

Total cost of the Forum for the LC was about 13,000 EUR for flights, accommodation, meals and cocktail. UNESCO Secretariat estimates that his contribution was approximately 20'000 EUR for meeting room, technician, interpretation, welcome coffee and security.

#### **B. Forum on Global Citizenship - 2020**

A preliminary note was put online on the Platform of discussion together with a questionnaire inviting all NGOs to respond by 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

A Steering committee for the Forum is composed of the following NGO representatives; Martine Levy (World Association of Girls Scout and Guides), Chantal Grevin (New Humanity), Nick Newland (Associated Country Women of the world) and a fourth NGO that will be identified after the return of questionnaires.

**Venue:** Secretariat has contacted some countries and is exploring other alternatives to host the Forum. It is recalled that however, in most instances, support from a country goes through a private non-profit entity. The funding of the Forum remains uncertain. LC is solicited to look for options too.

#### **C. Forum on Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in support of SDGs - 2020**

An initial contact was made with a National commission. Daves Guhza (co-pilot of forum) is checking on hosting possibilities. Contributions were made by LC members and the Secretariat for the first draft of a concept note prior to the forming a preparatory group.

#### **D. Event by ABSS (India) "Global Festival of Intangible Cultural Heritage - 'Unity in Diversity' "- November 2020 (tbc)**

It is recalled that the LC has already agreed to bring its moral support to the event.

### **8. International Days, other working groups and collective activities**

**Peace:** A proposal was sent by the working group to host an International Peace Day on 15 September 2020 in Spain (Basque region) with the participation of the musical group. A contribution of € 1500 by the LC is confirmed.

**Girl Child:** the working group is planning to organize an event on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2020.

**Climate change:** Richard Apeh informed the LC that he will not continue as co-leader of the working group as he feels he does not have the necessary autonomy he needs to manage the group. He will however continue as member of the working group.

**Youth:** Richard Apeh as LC member referent for the Group is considering organizing with the group an NGO youth event in April/May at UNESCO headquarters (preferably on a weekend) on a topic to attract the interest of young people. Topics considered are: collective consultation on youth and climate, decade of action on ESD, or in connection with the medium term strategy. Proposal will be submitted to the LC.

**CCNGO Education:** The President shares information on the workshop on “Inclusion: Make it for all” led by the Liaison Committee. Documents and outcomes of the 9<sup>th</sup> CCNGO global meeting are available on the LC website. Next meeting of the CCNGO is scheduled for March.

**2020 ICNGO and midterm strategy:** The Secretariat informs that for the elaboration of the medium-term strategy, there may be a specific questionnaire addressed to NGOs in addition to the general questionnaire for which the LC is invited to mobilize NGOs to respond individually.

The 2011 Directives providing that the ICNGO gathers advice and suggestions from NGO’s on the preliminary proposal of the DG on UNESCO’s Draft Programme and Budget, with the guidance provided of the Executive Board, these documents shall be communicated to the LC to prepare that collective consultation. The Secretariat offers to work on a draft proposal that could be submitted to the NGOs prior to the 2020 ICNGO.

Tentative dates for the ICNGO: 9 to 11 of December 2020; the Secretariat to check on the availability of the rooms.

## **9. Communication**

Minutes of LC meetings: Diego Gradis will extract the main decisions of all LC 2019 meetings to be posted on the website. Other points on communication on the Agenda cannot be covered due to lack of time but the President recalls that the communication is essential and should be a priority concern for next meetings of the LC.

## **10. Misc.**

- **Request for the support of a Peace Forum:** not approved as yet/approval pending further information.
- **Internship:** two proposals are to be analysed by the President and the VP.
- **Alternates of LC members:** NGOs members of the LC are encouraged to be represented by the alternate at LC meeting where the principal cannot attend.
- **Reservation of rooms for meetings:** the service of conferences is the decision-making entity on requests passed on by the Unit for Civil Society Partnerships.

**11. Next Liaison Committee meeting:** 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 14h-17h, UNESCO Headquarters

## **12. Other Business**

- Abdel Basset proposes to host a meeting of the LC in Tunisia in connection with a roundtable discussion. Committee expresses its gratitude and welcomes this invitation for the meeting after March 2020.
- In May 2020, an inter-regional meeting of National commissions will take place in Lugano, Switzerland. A proposal will be made to the organizers to have a slot reserved for the LC to present the role of NGOs at UNESCO. The President and Diego Gradis could represent the LC.