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National Commissions in Action

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by the National
Commissions Section,
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Editorial

It was gratifying to note how manifestly the 35th session of the General Conference reiterated the unique role of National Commissions in the promotion of UNESCO’s mission. Member States expressed their high appreciation and full endorsement of the Organization’s policy and activities in support of National Commissions. Our recent efforts to better position National Commission in several key areas in the context of their growing responsibilities were especially welcomed and commended. All this is certainly encouraging.



Mr Ahmed Sayyad,
ADG/ERC

Both the Secretariat and the Member States should make every effort to keep this momentum high. The new Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs Irina Bokova, is firmly committed in reinforcing UNESCO’s relations with National Commissions. This gives us much encouragement as well as a huge responsibility. We have to explore optimal modalities of further promoting National Commissions’ proactive engagement in UNESCO’s programmes, developing and implementing innovative policy measures to that effect.

While new opportunities are unfolding for National Commissions, especially within the on-going UN Delivering as One process, great challenges facing them in their daily work are also persistently enduring. We must mobilize all efforts and resources to enhance the status, structures, and capacities of so many National Commissions worldwide. Systematic measures should be taken to marshal effectively intellectual wealth and extensive scientific networks with which National Commissions are naturally associated, especially in the light of the Director-General’s vision to enhance the intellectual role of UNESCO in the promotion of a new humanism in the world.

Ahmed Sayyad
Assistant Director-General for
External Relations and Cooperation

Irina Bokova: “National Commissions ... deserve our full support and recognition ... I intend to reinforce our ties with them”



Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General

**“With their hundreds,
if not thousands of dedicated men
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National Commissions should be
strengthened and supported in every
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guardians of the spirit and values of
the Organization.”**

The 35th session of the General Conference elected Mrs Irina Bokova (Bulgaria) as new Director-General of UNESCO, following her designation by the Executive Board on 22 September 2009. Mrs Bokova is the first woman appointed to the helm of the Organization, who formally took office on 15 November 2009.

Born in Sofia in 1952, Mrs Bokova served since June 2005 as her country’s Ambassador to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO. As a career diplomat and former Member of Parliament, she was Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria in 1996-1997.

In her investiture speech at the General Conference on 23 October 2009, Mrs Bokova paid particular attention to the added value of National Commissions and explained her vision of this unique network of UNESCO. “UNESCO National Commissions, she said, as one of our faithful allies, also deserve our full support and recognition for their remarkable work. No other UN institution has this type of mechanism. It is unique to our Organization and anchors us at the national level. I therefore intend to reinforce our ties with National Commissions that, I believe, are particularly well placed to ensure that UNESCO’s values and role within the United Nations family, are better understood, visible, taken advantage of, and ultimately supported.”

The Mission Statement of the new Director-General, which was announced on the occasion of her taking office, emphasized again the key role of the National Commissions. It stated that “UNESCO has a unique tool for mobilizing public opinion and the intellectual and academic communities in the pursuit of its values and priorities – the National Commissions. With their hundreds, if not thousands of dedicated men and women all over the world, the National Commissions should be strengthened and supported in every possible manner, as they are the true guardians of the spirit and values of the Organization” .

IN FOCUS 35th session of the General Conference as an occasion to re-endorse National Commissions' key role in UNESCO's work

Figures and facts

The 35th session of the General Conference, which took place in Paris from 6 to 23 October 2009, was attended by more than 3000 participants, including eight Heads of State and Government and some 260 ministers and deputy ministers.

The General Conference was marked by the election of Mrs Irina Bokova as new Director-General of UNESCO succeeding Mr Koichiro Matsuura (1999-2009). Two ministerial roundtables on education and the oceans as well as a Ministerial Forum were organized during this period. The common exhibition on "Cultures and Developments" and the launching of the World Report "Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue" were held within the framework of the Conference.

The General Conference endorsed the request of the Faroe Islands to become an Associate Member, thus increasing UNESCO's membership to two hundred (193 Member States and 7 Associate Members) – one of the largest in the whole UN system. The programme and budget for 2010-2011 was approved for a total of US\$ 653 million, which represents a nominal increase of 3.5%. The shares of the programme sectors in the new budget are: Education (US\$ 118.5 mln); Sciences (US\$ 59 mln); Social Sciences (US\$ 30 mln); Culture (US\$ 53 mln); and Communication/Information (US\$ 33 mln).

The General Conference was also full of events with direct relevance to National Commissions, as highlighted in this bulletin.

Former Chair of the Bahamas National Commission at the head of UNESCO's supreme ruling body

It is wonderful news for National Commissions that the General Conference elected H.E. Mr Davidson Hepburn (Commonwealth of The Bahamas) as the President of its 35th session. Mr Hepburn is a man of great experience and close friend of National Commissions. He was the Chairman of the Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO for 14 years (1991-2005). In that position, he represented The Bahamas on the Executive Board (2001-2005) and chaired its Committee on Conventions & Recommendations. He also served for 10 years as Ambassador of his country to the United Nations.



Mr Davidson Hepburn

Mr Hepburn honored the Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO on 14 October 2009 with an opening address. He congratulated National Commissions for their valuable work and significant contributions, underscoring that National Commissions should be regarded as part and parcel of UNESCO.

It is also worth mentioning that four Commissions of the General Conference were ably chaired by personalities who are closely linked to National Commissions, namely:

- **Chairperson of the PRX Commission:** Ambassador Zahir Aziz of Afghanistan, former Secretary-General of the Afghan National Commission for UNESCO and former Director in UNESCO's Division of National Commissions
- **Chairperson of the SC Commission:** Ambassador Siméon Anguelov, Member of the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO
- **Chairperson of the SHS Commission:** Ms Salwa Saniora Baassiri, Secretary-General of the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO
- **Chairperson of the CLT Commission:** Ambassador Osman Faruk Logoglu, Deputy Chair of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

Coordinating Role of National Commissions highlighted at the Partners Forum

On 5 October 2009, a UNESCO Partners' Forum "UNESCO and its partners: multiple partnerships for a common ideal" was held for the first time as an integral part of the General Conference. It brought together a broad range of entities that support the Organization's ideals and action in order to give them the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. The Forum's participants included National Commissions and non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, local elected officials, business leaders and representatives of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations, UNESCO Chairs and the national committees of intergovernmental science programmes.

Mr Luis Ramallo, President of the Spanish National Commission and Chairperson of the Coordinating Group of National Commissions, Ambassador Preciosa Soliven, Secretary-General of the National Commission of the Philippines, Mr Arief Rachman, Executive Chairman of the Indonesian National Commission and Mr Roland Bernecker, Secretary-General of the German Commission were among the panellist speakers of the Forum. Based on their own experiences, they highlighted different aspects of National Commissions' coordinating functions at the national level and advocated for a greater and more proactive role in outreaching and mobilizing multi stakeholders and partners for UNESCO.

"Panellist highlighted different aspects of National Commissions' coordinating functions at the national level and advocated for a greater and more proactive role in outreaching and mobilizing multi stakeholders and partners for UNESCO."

The Forum reiterated that the challenges of a world of multiple interactions cannot be met by the community of States alone: UNESCO must be able to rely on the solid commitment of its partners and the living strength they represent. UNESCO could not achieve its goals without the ongoing support of all members of society. The Organization should continue to reach out to the world through engaging with civil society partners at the global policy level, while reinforcing such cooperation at the country level.

It was recommended that this type of Forum should be held on a regular basis and be extended by one or two days in order for its work to be carried out in the best way possible. The Forum should serve as an opportunity to strengthen ties between the Organization and its traditional partners; to seek out new partnerships through which to strengthen UNESCO's intellectual role; to secure new sources of extrabudgetary funding; to promote the visibility of the Organization; and to rally the capacities of those determined to accompany UNESCO in meeting the challenges of the upcoming decade.

The report of the Forum (Document 35 C/INF.27) can be consulted at: [//unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001848/184883e.pdf](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001848/184883e.pdf)

National Commissions called upon to support youth initiatives



Participants of the Youth forum

128 youth delegates from 89 Member States participated in the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, which took place at UNESCO on 1-3 October 2009 under the theme "Investing out of the crisis: towards a partnership between UNESCO and youth organizations". Youth delegates expressed their commitment to "invest out of the crisis" using their energy, creativity and sense of responsibility to take action. They assured that their contribution



The representatives of National Commissions at the Partners Forum highlighted the different aspects of National Commissions' coordinating role at the national level.

and ideas could make a difference, but they needed to be heard. They insisted to have more resources and support for their initiatives, as well as more mechanisms for youth involvement in UNESCO. They formulated their recommendations addressed to Member States and National Commissions.

The Director-General's tribute to National Commissions in the PRX Commission

UNESCO's policy and programme for National Commissions in 2010-2011 were examined in the PRX Commission. The representatives of Member States stressed the importance of National Commissions, commending their unique role in enhancing the visibility of UNESCO and its activities. The vast majority of speakers stressed the importance of further improving the operational capacities of the National Commissions, insisting that capacity-building will help increase the central role of National Commissions in fulfilling UNESCO's goals at national level. A more vigorous approach to the promotion of networking among National Commissions was requested as well as improvements in their partnerships with civil society organizations and interaction with field offices.



The Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koichiro Matsuura, visited the PRX Commission during its last session, in order to pay a special tribute to the particular role of National Commissions. He underscored the unfailing support of National Commissions to the advancement of UNESCO's objectives and programmes, and recalled that UNESCO is privileged to be the only agency within the United Nations system to have a global network of National Commissions. On that occasion, the Director-General granted the UNESCO Rumi Gold Medal to Ambassador Zahir Aziz, Chair of the PRX Commission, as a token of appreciation of his more than 40 years of service for the ideals of UNESCO and in support of the global network of National Commissions.

We, the participants of the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum,

We strongly call on every **Member State** to include youth delegates within their official delegation to the UNESCO General Conference by 2011, based on a common set of criteria;

We call on all UNESCO **National Commissions** to create permanent youth desks;

We urge **National Commissions** to invest in the preparation, follow-up and monitoring of previous recommendations, and encourage youth regional meetings for this purpose;

We urge **Member States** to ensure greater international representation of delegates at the Youth Forum and to secure funding for least developed countries that may not be able to send youth delegates to the Forum;

We encourage **Member States** to cooperate closely with youth organizations and their partners, to establish or to develop existing representative and inclusive youth councils at national level to enhance communication between us and our governments;

We welcome the initiatives of **National Commissions** which disseminate good practices regarding our involvement in their work;

We ask **UNESCO and its Member States** to cooperate with NGOs and media institutions to promote positive messages on issues such as non-violence, to disseminate good practices amongst youth, and to ensure that the Bonn Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development is implemented;

We request the establishment of an evaluation mechanism of the concrete actions and support of **National Commissions** in implementing the recommendations of the Forum.

Regional priorities and future plans discussed in the informal meetings of National Commissions

As per a long-standing tradition, the Section of National Commissions (ERC/NAC) organized during the General Conference five informal regional meetings of National Commissions, each of which lasted for an half a day. On those occasions, ERC/NAC reported on its two-year activities in support of National Commissions, which were highly commended. Those meetings also enabled to identify the hosts of the next round of DG regional consultations on the preparation of the draft 36 C/5, to discuss

the roles and positioning of National Commissions in the UN Delivering as One process and to exchange information on best practices of promoting regional and interregional cooperation among National Commissions. The discussions were held in the atmosphere of sincerity and openness and a number of innovative ideas were suggested for future action. The summary reports of those meetings are being distributed to National Commissions and Permanent Delegations.



National Commissions meetings

A permanent platform of National Commissions underlined to enhance their position and promote their action

As in the past, an Interregional Meeting of National Commissions was held on 14 October 2009, which was chaired by Mr Luis Ramallo, Chairperson of the Coordinating Group of National Commissions. The meeting was attended by the representatives of some 90 National Commissions as well as numerous staff members of the Secretariat. The President of the 35th session of the General Conference, Mr Davidson Hepburn, addressed the participants at the opening. The meeting's participants noted with satisfaction that there were more and more signs of a better understanding and greater recognition of National Commissions' unique role in UNESCO. There is also much more and visible willingness for cooperation between Field Offices and National Commissions.

Several participants insisted that National Commissions should be seen as "part" but not "partners" of the Organization. In the context of the UN reform process, National Commissions should be more proactive and participative, taking advantage of their dual interface with governments and civil society. Vast



National Commissions with Director-General

DG's Regional Consultation with National Commissions on the preparation of the draft Programme and Budget for 2012-2013 (36 C/5)

The following countries were proposed to host the next regional consultations on the 36 C/5 (to be combined with the quadrennial conferences of National Commissions in the Africa and Arab regions) in May-July 2010:

- Africa: Uganda
- Arab States: Morocco
- Asia and the Pacific: Republic of Korea
- Europe and North America: United Kingdom
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Trinidad and Tobago

intellectual resources and significant achievements of National Commissions should be better known and widely promoted. Closer cooperation between National Commissions and Permanent Delegations should be encouraged. Several speakers advised that National Commissions should be granted a more formal status to present their views and positions within the Organization, which seemed currently missing.

The meeting also discussed the composition of the Coordinating Group of National Commissions for 2010-2011. It was suggested that the past and present organizers of the DG's Regional Consultations automatically become members of the Group. At the request of several participants, Mr Luis Ramallo, who is the President of the Spanish National Commission and Chair of the Coordinating Group for the 2008-2009 biennium, accepted to continue to chair the Group of National Commissions for the next two years. The meeting's report is being distributed to National Commissions and Permanent Delegations.

The representatives of National Commissions, meeting with Mr Koichiro Matsuura during the General Conference, thanked him for his sustained support to National Commissions during his 10-year tenure as Director-General of UNESCO.

Visit of National Commissions to IIEP

On 15 October 2009, a group of Secretaries-General and other officials of National Commissions attending the General Conference paid a visit to the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in Paris. They were warmly received

by the leadership of IIEP, who presented the Institute's main activities and its future plans. The visitors showed great enthusiasm in learning about IIEP's undertakings and expressed their willingness for closer collaboration in the pursuit of the Institute's mission.

Revitalization of the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project of National Commissions

The representatives of several National Commissions of the Arab States and European/North America regions met together in a working session on 12 October 2009, to discuss ways and means of promoting closer interregional and intercultural cooperation among themselves. They affirmed their keen interest in promoting cross cultural dialogue through concrete activities and agreed to revitalize the Euro-Arab Dialogue initiative - a framework project which was launched several years ago but became latent in

recent years. The momentum for the revitalization of the Project was felt particularly relevant in the context of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010) proclaimed by the UN Assembly.

The participants agreed to join efforts around a few major joint activities instead of multiplying small scale operations. It was said that a thorough study and evaluation of the past activities should be undertaken before launching new projects. Another outcome of the working meeting was the decision to set up a new Task Force on the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project to be composed of representatives of National Commissions from both regions. The two Coordinators of the Project (Kuwait and Slovenia) would consult the concerned National Commissions in their regions on the composition of the Task Force. It was proposed to organize the first meeting of the Task Force at UNESCO HQs in late January 2010.

Training programme for National Commissions vigorously pursued

Training of new officials with targeted programme and innovative approach has been at the centre of UNESCO's capacity-building programme for National Commissions. As staff turnover in National Commissions' secretariats is persistently high, the objective of such training is to provide new personnel with basic information about UNESCO and National Commissions' working methods and priorities, and to promote best practices and knowledge sharing among the Commissions.

In the 2008-2009 biennium, UNESCO has offered training to more than 250 officials of National Commissions through interregional, regional and sub-regional training schemes. Since last June, the National Commissions Section organized five sub-regional seminars in different parts of the world.

The Training Seminar for New Officials of Arab National Commissions was held on 16-18 June 2009 in Kairouan, a historic city of Tunisia which was proclaimed as one of three capitals of Islamic Culture in 2009. 20 representatives from 15 National Commissions of the Arab States Region



Kairouan, Tunisia

attended this Seminar, which was jointly organized by UNESCO and ISESCO within the framework of a partnership agreement between the two Organizations. The Seminar aimed at reinforcing the operational capacity of National Commissions and strengthening sub-regional cooperation among them. The participants were actively engaged in discussions on the status and functions of National Commissions, the Participation Programme and cooperation with civil society, notably the Clubs for UNESCO. They expressed their keen interest in participating in the execution of UNESCO programmes in close cooperation with Field Offices.

The Training Seminar for New Officials of Asian National Commissions was organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 22 to 24 June 2009, with the support of Spanish extra-budgetary funds.



Colombo, Sri Lanka

Through a three-day interactive training, representatives of 20 participating National Commissions were extensively briefed of the ways of strengthening National Commissions to better

respond to demands in the fields of UNESCO's competence as well as to more effectively implement UNESCO's activities at the grass roots level. There was an informative exchange of views on UNESCO's engagement in the One UN reform process and the participation of National Commissions in UN related activities at the country level. A number of innovative proposals for consolidating networking and exchange of information among Asian National Commissions were also discussed. The participants especially appreciated the interesting interventions made by their host – the experienced Secretary-General of the Sri Lanka National Commission, who is a former staff member of UNESCO.

The Training Workshop and Cluster Meeting for the National Commissions in the Caribbean Sub-Region took place in Roseau, Dominica, from 1 to 3 July 2009, thanks to the Bulgarian extra-budgetary contribution. Ten National Commissions were represented at this meeting, which was inaugurated by H.E. Mr Nicholas Liverpool, President of Dominica, in person. The workshop provided opportunities to Secretaries-General of the Caribbean National Commissions to get acquainted with the latest developments in UNESCO and to discuss preparations for the 35th session of the General Conference, in close consultation with the UNESCO Office in Kingston. Issues addressed included UNESCO's participation in the UN reform and National Commissions' role in this process, the consideration and adoption of UNESCO's Draft Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5) and common and coordinated actions to be taken during the 35th session of the General Conference.



Roseau, Dominica

The Training Seminar for New Officials of National Commissions of the Europe and North America Region took place in Tirana, Albania, on 2–4 November 2009. Organized in close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Venice, this was the first major gathering of UNESCO National Commissions held in Albania. Representatives of more than 20 National Commissions in the region, including several Secretaries-General, took part in the Seminar, which addressed a wide range of issues of common interest, such as the status and functions of National Commissions, their role in decentralization and the UN common country programming, public information,



Tirana, Albania

protection of UNESCO's name and logo, and in the coordination of partnerships with civil society. The role of Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and the modalities of improving their cooperation with National Commissions generated a lot of interest among the participants. Two experienced Secretaries-General of National Commissions from Slovenia and Switzerland efficiently moderated training sessions and shared their rich experiences with the participants.

Thirteen participants from seven African National Commissions attended the Capacity Building Workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 4-6 November 2009. This was the sixth and last workshop organized within the framework of the "Partnership Programme with the African National Commissions" project launched at the initiative of the German Commission for UNESCO and funded by the German Government. Like previous workshops held in Rwanda, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali and Cameroun, the Addis Ababa Seminar pursued the objective of better informing the participants of National Commissions' structures, positioning and functions as well as their role in activity planning and implementation. The Workshop also helped to enhance their knowledge of and build capacities in the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), the role of UNESCO Intergovernmental Programmes (such as MAB), and the UN reform process and its implications for UNESCO.



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

National Commission's participation in decentralization

UNESCO's Decentralization Review Task Force (DRTF), established in 2006, devoted a special session in January 2009 to the positioning of National Commissions in UN country level programming, in close collaboration with the field offices. Representatives of National Commissions of Germany, Spain, Swaziland and Viet Nam took part in those discussions.

National Commissions' role emphasized in the Director-General's report

The Report by the Director-General to the 182nd session of the Executive Board on the "Implementation of the Reform Process: Review of the Decentralization Strategy" (Document 182 EX/6 Part II) largely reflects the outcomes of the DRTF's discussions on the positioning of National Commissions. It recognizes that "within the new United Nations dynamics at country level, National Commissions play a vital role in advising UNESCO field offices on country priorities, acting as a source of information, as well as facilitating consultations with line ministries and mobilizing national expertise to help shape UNESCO's inputs to United Nations common country programming processes."

The report states that in order to play the above roles to the full, "National Commissions need to be well aware of the complexity and technicality of the United Nations common country processes. UNESCO field offices have therefore the responsibility to ensure that National Commissions are fully informed and regularly updated, and to encourage them to take on a complementary role compatible to their national status and accountability. They also have to inform UNCTs (United Nations Country Teams) of the added value of UNESCO National Commissions and of their international and national networks..."



The report underscores that "associating National Commissions of developing countries with United Nations common country programming processes should be done in a pragmatic and flexible manner... Such flexibility is important as National Commissions are different in each country, with varying strengths and weaknesses... National Commissions from developed and well-resourced countries... should nurture closer links with ministries in their countries dealing with ODA (Official Development Assistance) to advocate for UNESCO's ideals and priority programmes and projects. They could also develop training initiatives and programmes aimed at strengthening capacities of National Commissions in developing countries."

A Cluster Consultation of National Commissions in San Jose

The UNESCO Office in San José, together with the Costa Rican National Commission, organized the Coordination Meeting of National Commissions of the San José Cluster on 10-11 November 2009. The representatives from National Commissions of the seven cluster countries (Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico) as well as from the UNESCO Offices in San José, Mexico City and Guatemala took part in this two-day meeting to discuss the ways and means of strengthening cooperation between the UNESCO San José Office and the National Commissions, and to plan and coordinate joint activities. The meeting was supported by the Section for National Commissions (ERC/NAC).

A Meeting of National Commissions and the New Delhi Cluster Office held to boost their cooperation

The New Delhi Cluster Office under the new directorship of Mr A. Parsuramen in collaboration with the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, brought together the representatives of National Commissions of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka for a familiarization and planning meeting in New Delhi on 12-13 November 2009. The meeting aimed to establish main modalities for cluster cooperation and to identify key priorities for 2010-2011 including National Commissions' involvement in the UNDAF process. The meeting, supported by ERC/NAC, helped the participants to interact and network with other National Commissions as well as the staff of the New Delhi Office.

Networking, Partnerships and Cooperation among National Commissions

National Commissions met in Cambridge to improve a new approach for the next DG's Consultations in Europe and the North America region



Participants of the Cambridge meeting

On 4-5 July 2009, the UK National Commission for UNESCO hosted in Cambridge a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Director-General's Consultation with the European and North American National Commissions on the Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2012-2013 (36 C/5), which is scheduled to be held in London on 5-9 June 2010. Sixteen members of the Preparatory Committee attended the meeting to plan the organizational arrangements for the DG's Consultation. They examined in particular the overall objectives and design of the London Consultation, based on the New Approach used at the 2008 DG's Consultation in The Hague and Antwerp. The second meeting of the Preparatory Committee was held in Paris during the 35th session of the General Conference on 9 October 2009.

Missions for advocacy and in support of the Caribbean National Commissions

The sharing of experience in the spirit of intellectual solidarity is a key principle guiding cooperation among National Commissions. With this in mind, UNESCO encouraged the creation of a special Working Group in April 2009, with a view to contributing to strengthening the status, structures and resources of National Commissions in the Caribbean. The Working Group was made up of two experienced Secretaries-General of National Commissions in the region – Mr Antonio Maynard (St. Kitts and Nevis) and Mr Everton Hannam (Jamaica).

With the financial support of the Bulgarian government and the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO, the Working Group has visited five Member States and Associate Members in the Caribbean from July to September 2009. The countries visited included The British Virgin Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Martin, Grenada and Guyana.

The sharing of experience in the spirit of intellectual solidarity is a key principle guiding cooperation among National Commissions.

During the visits, the Working Group met with key stakeholders and responsible government officials of the countries, including Ministers, senior government members, Chairpersons and the Secretaries-General of National Commissions, in order to advocate for a greater role and sustained support for their National Commissions. The Group advised on necessary arrangements and basic requirements to make National Commissions efficient and dynamic entities both within countries and vis-à-vis UNESCO.

International Arts Education Workshop held in Vienna, Austria

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the National Commission of Senegal for UNESCO and the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation Moving Cultures, hosted an International Arts Workshop on 13–23 September 2009. 12 art teachers and 12 students aged 15–17 from different schools in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Slovenia, Hungary, France, Germany and Austria met to work together “eye to eye” on contemporary African and European Art.

This inter-cultural workshop aimed at reflecting the impact and the relevance of the Road Map on Arts Education within different educational systems in Europe and Africa. A variety of topics, techniques and methods as well as working together with curators, artists and cultural institutions gave fascinating insights into theory and practice. The participants had the opportunity to take advantage of artistic projects and works within the framework of the European Cultural Capital Linz09.

The project was supported through the Participation Programme of UNESCO as well as by LINZ09, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, KulturKontakt Austria and the Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

The next phase of the workshop will start with the same participants in Dakar, Senegal in May 2010, within the framework of the Biennale DAK'ART10.

High School Students from Africa and Europe met to work together “eye to eye” on contemporary African and European Art.



© Austrian National Commission

List of National Commissions who celebrated anniversaries in the 2008-2009 biennium

60th Anniversary:

Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Panama, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

50th Anniversary:

Albania, Argentina, Chile.

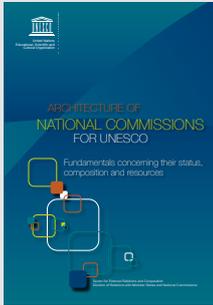
40th Anniversary:

Ethiopia, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

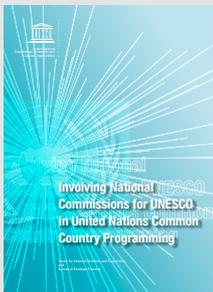
30th Anniversary:

China, Guyana, Kuwait, Malawi, Portugal, Swazland.

Recent Publications by the Section of National Commissions



The “**Architecture of National Commissions**” contains an overall analysis of the structural arrangements and operational capacities of National Commissions. It focuses on the fundamental requirements and resources that a Commission needs to perform successfully. There is also specific and detailed information on eighty Commissions which were selected on the basis of various factors, such as geographical representation, status, size, composition, and resources. This publication aims to help the reader to better understand the concept of National Commissions and the way of their functioning. It also contains suggestions on ways of establishing or restructuring National Commissions in the light of best practices.



“**Involving National Commissions for UNESCO in United Nations Common Country Programming**” is the first UNESCO publication to highlight both the potential role as well as the challenges of National Commissions in the UN “Delivering as One” process. The opportunities, challenges and eventual modalities for engaging National Commissions in common country programming processes are examined. The brochure also contains a number of key reference documents on this subject. The publication is expected to promote coordinated action by the National Commissions, UNESCO Field Offices and UN country teams.



The brochure “**Capacity-Building for National Commissions for UNESCO: A Partnership Programme with Africa**” is a joint edition of UNESCO and the German Commission for UNESCO. It explains the background and relevance of this innovative project in support of the African National Commissions which was jointly implemented by the UNESCO Secretariat and the German Commission, and supported by the German Government. The document highlights different aspects of cooperation between National Commissions, UNESCO HQs and Field Offices in the implementation of the project and provides initial assessment of its outcomes.



The website on National Commissions for UNESCO renewed. The new site, which is in English, French and Spanish, contains basic information and reference materials on National Commissions. It serves as a platform for diffusing news on important activities and provides information on actions taken at the sub-regional, regional and interregional levels in support of the global network of National Commissions. There is also practical data to facilitate contacts and cooperation with National Commissions worldwide. The site can be consulted at:

www.unesco.org/en/national-commissions