

## UNESCO 36 C/Resolution 108

### New Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations<sup>1</sup>

*The General Conference,*

*Acknowledging* the growing number of non-governmental actors involved at all levels and in all fields in the formulation and implementation of UNESCO's programmes, thereby attesting to their strategic role,

*Further acknowledging* the need for UNESCO to open up to ever more diverse partners with a grasp of the realities on the ground and to individuals, in every region of the world, in particular those with the greatest needs,

*Taking into account* the Organization's constant efforts in past years, both at the level of the Secretariat and of the governing bodies, to diversify, revitalize and strengthen its cooperation with NGOs, and to take their skills, effectiveness and potential into better account,

Also *taking into account* the guidance given by UNESCO to such cooperation in 34 C/Resolution 59 on the sexennial report by the Executive Board to the General Conference on the contribution made to UNESCO's activities by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (2001-2006),

*Further taking into account* the strategic orientations of the independent external evaluation of UNESCO (185 EX/18 and Add.) and the decision adopted by the Executive Board at its 186th session (186 EX/Decision 17) for the purpose of following up the recommendations of the evaluation,

*Recognizing* the need to draw up a new, simplified statutory partnership framework, better suited to recent developments in the way in which multilateral institutions interact with civil society,

*Having examined* the recommendation made by the Executive Board at its 187th session,

*Adopts* the new Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations, the text of which is annexed hereto; the new Directives supersede the Directives that it adopted under 28 C/Resolution 13.42.

## ANNEX

### Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations

#### Preamble

1. In implementation of the provisions of Article XI of its Constitution, UNESCO has built up over the years a valuable network of cooperation in its fields of competence with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing civil society. This partnership bears witness to the importance of the work of those organizations alongside government-sponsored action in international cooperation in the service of peoples for development, equality, international understanding and peace.
2. Non-governmental organizations are now involved in all of UNESCO's fields of competence. These Directives provide the framework within which the partnerships it desires to maintain with such organizations may develop under the most favourable conditions. The Directives are designed to make the non-governmental organizations official partners for the development and implementation of UNESCO's programmes. The aim is to develop a genuine partnership culture allowing UNESCO to legitimize its action, achieve its objectives and make them more visible. Since UNESCO is not a funding institution, this partnership will be essentially of an intellectual nature.
3. The following provisions are designed to lay the foundations for a mutual partnership between UNESCO and the competent non-governmental organizations representing civil society for the preparation and the execution of its programme, and thus increase international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, communication and information. In addition, they should promote the emergence of new organizations

that are representative of civil society in those regions of the world where such organizations, for historical, cultural or geographical reasons, are isolated or weak, and help to include them in the partnership.

## **I. General principles**

### **1. Definition**

UNESCO may establish official partnerships with international, regional, national or local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Any organization may qualify as a non-governmental organization which may become a partner of UNESCO provided that it has not been established by intergovernmental agreement, or by a government and that its purposes, functions, structure and operation are non-governmental, democratic and non-profit-making in character. The international or regional NGO must form, through its regular active membership (consisting of institutions and/or individuals), a community linked by a desire to pursue, in a significant number of countries or regions, the objectives for which it was established.

### **2. Categories of partnership**

Two categories of partnership may be established with NGOs according to the structure and aims of such organizations, the nature of their cooperation with UNESCO and the scale of the contribution they are able to make to it. One is aimed at achieving a flexible and dynamic partnership in the definition and implementation of UNESCO's programmes (**consultative status**), and the other involves close and sustained cooperation in defining and implementing the Organization's programme (**associate status**).

### **3. Common essential conditions**

- 3.1 The non-governmental organization shall fulfil the following conditions:
  - (a) it shall be engaged in activities in one or more specific fields of UNESCO's competence, and it shall be able and willing to make an effective contribution to framing UNESCO's objectives and/or to implementing its programmes, in conformity with the principles proclaimed in UNESCO's Constitution;
  - (b) it shall be effectively engaged in activities in a spirit of cooperation, tolerance and solidarity, in the interests of humankind and with respect for cultural identities;
  - (c) it shall have a recognized legal status;
  - (d) it shall have an established headquarters and be governed by democratically adopted statutes stipulating, in particular, that its general policy is determined by a conference, assembly or other representative body that functions democratically; those statutes shall also stipulate that it shall have a permanent, representative and regularly renewed governing body, representatives who are duly elected by the main body of the organization, and basic resources deriving chiefly from members' contributions, its activities and gifts or bequests, that enable it to function;
  - (e) it shall have been in existence and have been carrying out activities for at least two years at the time it requests the establishment of a partnership.
- 3.2 Cooperation with national or local NGOs shall, moreover, be conducted in consultation with the National Commission for UNESCO of the Member State concerned and, if appropriate, in liaison with UNESCO's field units. Such organizations are not eligible for associate status.

## **II. Consultative status**

1. The Director-General may, if he/she deems it useful for the development and implementation of UNESCO's programmes, cooperate with any non-governmental organization in the category of official partnership known as "consultative status" according to the admission procedures laid down in section IV.
2. This category of partnership is designed to enable UNESCO to establish and maintain flexible and dynamic partnerships with any organization of civil society that is active in UNESCO's fields of competence at whatever level, and to benefit from its expertise, the representativeness of its networks for the dissemination of information and, if appropriate, its operational capacities in the field. Moreover, this category of partnership should make it possible to facilitate the emergence of organizations which

are representative of civil society, and their interaction at the international level, in those parts of the world where they are weak or isolated.

### **III. Associate status**

1. The Executive Board, on the recommendation of the Director-General, should he/she deem such a decision to be useful for the achievement of the objectives of UNESCO, may admit an international or regional non-governmental organization fulfilling the conditions defined in sections I and II, to the partnership category known as "associate status". This partnership is established for a renewable period of eight years.
2. Such organizations shall also:
  - (a) have proven competence in an important field of education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, or communication and information, and have a record of regular major contributions to framing UNESCO's objectives and implementing its programmes;
  - (b) have maintained a continuous and effective partnership (consultative status) for at least two years.

### **IV. Admission, modification, termination and suspension of partnerships**

#### **1. Admission**

##### **A. Consultative status**

- 1.1 Requests for partnership (consultative status) may be submitted at any time by NGOs to the Director-General, together with the following documents concerning the NGO:
  - (a) the statutes;
  - (b) the instrument of legal recognition;
  - (c) the list of members by country and, where appropriate, by category, as provided in the statutes;
  - (d) the latest activity report covering a period of at least two years, including a detailed financial report on the previous financial year;
  - (e) a brief description of the projects that the organization hopes to implement with UNESCO, and a brief description of activities already implemented in cooperation with UNESCO.
- 1.2 The Director-General shall decide upon the establishment of a partnership between UNESCO and the NGOs (consultative status) and shall report thereon to the Executive Board once a year.

##### **B. Associate status**

- 1.3 The Executive Board shall decide on the admission of NGO partners to associate status with UNESCO and on the renewal of the partnership, on the recommendation of the Director-General (see section III).
- 1.4 Any international or regional partner organization with consultative status for at least two years may submit a request for admission to associate status, no later than 30 November of each year, for decision by the Executive Board at its first session of the following year. The request must include a list of the NGO's individual and/or institutional members, its most recent activities report, and a summary of cooperation with UNESCO in the previous two years. The summary must attest to regular, specific and productive cooperation between UNESCO and the NGO on the basis of several joint projects that have demonstrated the importance to UNESCO of maintaining a close partnership with the NGO in order to implement its programmes. Requests rejected by the Executive Board may not be resubmitted to it until at least four years have elapsed after its decision.
- 1.5 The Director-General shall inform the organizations admitted to each partnership category of the corresponding obligations and advantages.

#### **2. Modification, termination and suspension of partnerships**

##### **A. Modification of partnerships**

- 2.1 Where the Director-General considers that circumstances make it necessary to move an organization from associate to consultative status, he/she shall refer the matter to

the Executive Board for decision. Before doing so, he/she shall inform the organization concerned of the grounds for his/her proposal, and shall communicate any observations the organization may wish to make to the Executive Board before any final decision is taken.

#### **B. Termination of partnerships**

- 2.2 When the Director-General deems it necessary to end an associate partnership with a non-governmental organization, he/she shall refer the matter to the Executive Board for decision. Before doing so, he/she shall inform the organization concerned of the grounds for his/her proposal, and shall communicate any observations that the organization may wish to make to the Executive Board before any final decision is taken.
- 2.3 The decision to terminate a consultative partnership depends on the Director-General. He/she shall inform the Executive Board.
- 2.4 Absence of collaboration for a period of four years between UNESCO and a partner organization under these Directives shall result in the automatic termination of the official partnership.

#### **C. Suspension of partnerships**

- 2.5 As an interim measure, the Director-General may, if circumstances so require, suspend the partnership with an organization, until such time as the Executive Board is able to take a decision, where necessary.

### **V. Obligations of UNESCO's NGO partners**

#### **1. General principles**

UNESCO partner organizations shall:

- (a) keep the Director-General regularly informed of their activities, particularly those carried out in UNESCO's fields of competence, of changes that have taken place in their governing bodies, and of the assistance given by them to the achievement of UNESCO's objectives;
- (b) acquaint their members, by all the means at their command, with those UNESCO programme activities and achievements that are likely to interest them;
- (c) invite UNESCO to be represented at those of their meetings whose agenda is of interest to UNESCO;
- (d) send representatives, as far as possible at the highest level, to the International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations provided for in section XI.1 below;
- (e) contribute substantially to the preparation of the periodic reports mentioned in section X drawn up by the Director-General and submitted to the Executive Board and General Conference on contributions made to UNESCO's action by non-governmental organizations.

#### **2. Associate status**

In addition to the obligations contained in section V.1 above, organizations enjoying associate status with UNESCO shall:

- (a) collaborate closely, regularly and effectively with UNESCO by expanding joint activities in UNESCO's fields of competence;
- (b) maintain, through their networks and regional and/or national representatives, effective coordination with UNESCO's field units and with the National Commissions for UNESCO in the various countries.

### **VI. Advantages granted to UNESCO's NGO partners**

#### **1. General principles**

- (a) the Director-General shall take all necessary measures to ensure the appropriate exchange of information and documents with NGOs on matters of joint interest;
- (b) they shall be associated as closely and regularly as possible with the various stages of the planning (see section VII) and execution of UNESCO's programme within their own particular field;

- (c) in accordance with the provisions of Article IV, paragraph 14, of the Constitution, and with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, official NGO partners of UNESCO whose admission lies within the competence of the Executive Board may send observers to sessions of the General Conference. The other official NGO partners of UNESCO may be invited to send observers on the decision of the Director-General acting on behalf of the General Conference. These observers may make statements on matters within their respective competence in the commissions, committees and subsidiary bodies of the General Conference, with the consent of the presiding officer; they may address plenary meetings of the General Conference on particular matters of major importance that fall within their competence with the authorization of the General Committee of the Conference, in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference;
- (d) they shall be invited by the Chairperson of the Committee on Non-Governmental Partners of the Executive Board to participate in the Committee's sessions;
- (e) on the authorization of the Chairperson of the Executive Board, requested in writing, they may take part as observers in the other bodies of the Executive Board;
- (f) they shall be invited to send observers to some UNESCO meetings if, in the opinion of the Director-General, they are in a position to make a significant contribution to the work of those meetings; if unable to be represented at those meetings, they may forward their views in writing;
- (g) they shall be invited to participate in various collective consultations of NGOs on specific subjects organized by UNESCO in connection with the implementation of its programme;
- (h) they shall have access to some of the financial procedures for cooperation described in section VIII of these Directives;
- (i) they may, under the authority of their governing body, submit written statements at any time to the Director-General on UNESCO programme matters within their competence. The Director-General shall, if he/she deems it to be necessary, communicate the substance of these statements to the Executive Board or, if appropriate, to the General Conference;
- (j) they may also use UNESCO's conference rooms and facilities on the most favourable terms.

## **2. Consultative status**

In addition, memoranda of agreement on the execution of one or more specific projects may be concluded with organizations in consultative status with UNESCO.

## **3. Associate status**

In addition, the following advantages shall be granted to organizations enjoying associate status with UNESCO:

- (a) framework agreements for cooperation, concerning general cooperation and for a renewable duration of eight years, may be concluded with these organizations, setting the joint priorities that they and UNESCO undertake to pursue together during that period;
- (b) as far as is possible, office accommodation may be provided on the most favourable terms for those organizations with which it is particularly necessary for the Secretariat to keep in constant touch for the implementation of UNESCO's programme.

## **VII. Consultation about UNESCO's strategy and programme**

In order to associate non-governmental organizations fully with the development of UNESCO's objectives, priorities and programmes and to foster sustained upstream cooperation, UNESCO offers its NGO partners under these Directives a chance to be fully involved in its programming cycle in the following ways:

- (a) NGO partners of UNESCO under these Directives shall receive a questionnaire as part of consultations to draw up UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy, and its Draft Programme and Budget. They are thereby invited, on the Director-General's request, to provide their views and suggestions and to submit recommendations

in writing about UNESCO's priorities and programme. These views and suggestions shall be communicated to the Executive Board together with the preliminary proposals of the Director-General;

- (b) An information meeting shall be organized by the Secretariat at UNESCO Headquarters in order to provide guidance to NGOs on this procedure. As far as is possible, this meeting shall be streamed live online, thereby enabling NGOs unable to attend to submit questions to the speakers electronically;
- (c) the International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in partnership with UNESCO (see section XI) is then invited to communicate collectively to the Director-General the NGOs' views and suggestions about the Draft Programme and Budget, including the guidance provided by the Executive Board;
- (d) at sessions of the UNESCO General Conference, NGO partners may also address the commissions, committees and subsidiary bodies as well as the plenary, in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 14, of the Constitution, and with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference (see section VI).

### **VIII. Financial arrangements for cooperation**

UNESCO may make financial contributions to non-governmental organizations likely to make a particularly effective contribution to the implementation of its programme. NGOs may make financial contributions to UNESCO for the execution of its programme.

#### **1. General principles**

Financial contributions granted by UNESCO to non-governmental organizations shall be governed, as appropriate, by the following principles:

- (a) they shall be granted in accordance with the relevant rules currently in force;
- (b) they shall be granted for programmes and activities that have a bearing on UNESCO's priorities or constitute a useful addition to UNESCO's programmes and activities;
- (c) in no circumstances shall they constitute a permanent commitment on the part of UNESCO;
- (d) they shall be granted solely for the purpose of supplementing the revenue that the beneficiary organization derives from other sources;
- (e) an organization receiving a financial contribution shall have made appropriate arrangements for regular evaluation of the activities so financed and for the submission of reports on the implementation of those activities.

#### **2. Practical arrangements**

The financial contributions are of three kinds: (a) contributions for the implementation of a framework agreement, (b) other contracts for the execution of UNESCO's programme, and (c) contributions under the Participation Programme.

##### **A. Contributions for the implementation of a framework agreement<sup>1</sup>**

Organizations enjoying associate status with UNESCO and with which the Director-General has concluded a framework agreement may receive financial contributions either for the execution of activities included in UNESCO's programme, or to fund their initiatives which supplement those of UNESCO. The granting of such contributions shall be subject to the following conditions:

- (a) the financial contribution must be included in a specific General Conference resolution in relation to the Draft Programme and Budget of UNESCO. Once they are approved by the General Conference, the above-mentioned activities and the corresponding financial contribution shall be the subject of an exchange of letters between the parties;
- (b) the beneficiary organization must submit to UNESCO an analytical report with detailed financial statement in respect of UNESCO's contribution for the implementation of the framework agreement, as well as a qualitative report of the result obtained. The disbursement of financial contributions for further cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> Such framework arrangements shall be concluded according to a standard model.

shall be subject to the approval by UNESCO of the report on the activities carried out during the preceding period.

#### **B. Other contracts for the execution of UNESCO's programme**

Whenever the Director-General deems it necessary for the proper execution of UNESCO's programme, he/she may conclude with non-governmental organizations a contract for the execution of activities forming part of the programme adopted by the General Conference. Such contracts may also be concluded with the organizations referred to in section VIII.2.A above.

#### **C. Financial contributions under the Participation Programme**

NGO partners of UNESCO may submit requests under the Participation Programme in accordance with the relevant resolution of the Programme and Budget (C/5). The corresponding financial contributions are subject to the General Conference resolution governing the Participation Programme.

### **IX. Use of the UNESCO name, logo and patronage**

Patronage and use of the name, acronym and logo of UNESCO for particular or special events/activities may be granted to any non-governmental organizations in conformity with the Directives concerning the use of the name, acronym, logo and Internet domain names of UNESCO adopted by the General Conference and currently in force.

### **X. Periodic review of the partnership**

1. The Director-General shall provide in his/her periodic reports to the governing bodies, in particular on the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference, information on the main aspects of cooperation between UNESCO and NGO partners.
2. Every four years at the General Conference the Director-General shall present a report on the changes that have taken place in the list of NGO partners and on the assistance they have provided to UNESCO in its work, together with an evaluation of the results. This report shall, in particular, contain a list of organizations whose lack of collaboration has resulted in the automatic termination of their partnership with UNESCO, in accordance with these Directives.

### **XI. Collective cooperation with NGO partners**

#### **1. International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations**

- 1.1 UNESCO NGO partners under these Directives (in consultative or associate status) shall hold a conference every two years to review the state of cooperation with UNESCO, conduct collective consultations on the main lines of UNESCO's programme, and facilitate cooperation between organizations having common interests. This global forum shall, in particular, enable the Director-General to gather advice and suggestions from non-governmental organizations that are UNESCO's partners in the priority fields of its programme, especially regarding the Director-General's preliminary proposals on UNESCO's Draft Programme and Budget, including the guidance provided by the Executive Board (see section VII).
- 1.2 The International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations shall elect its Chairperson in accordance with the procedures established by its rules of procedure. It shall also elect a NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee made up of 10 NGO partners (four with associate status and six with consultative status). All of the regions, as defined by UNESCO, shall be represented by at least one NGO partner having its headquarters in that region. The Chairperson of the International Conference shall also chair the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, and shall be elected for a non-renewable two-year term of office.

#### **2. NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee**

- 2.1 The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee's role between meetings of the International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations shall be to:
  - (a) represent the interests of all the NGO partners with regard to UNESCO;

- (b) take all necessary steps to ensure the proper functioning and efficiency of the partnership between the community of NGO partners and UNESCO;
  - (c) ensure the appropriate exchange of information with the non-governmental community it represents and, in this connection, promote consultation among NGOs at all levels;
  - (d) implement the resolutions adopted by the International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations and make preparations, in consultation with the Director-General, for the subsequent session of the International Conference, including, for the first session of the International Conference, its draft rules of procedure;
  - (e) ensure that the opinions of NGOs taken collectively are reflected by UNESCO in the preparation of its draft programme;
  - (f) contribute to preparations for the debates of the Executive Board's Committee on Non-Governmental Partners, in particular by promoting, as far as possible, the participation of a large number of NGOs;
  - (g) organize, in consultation with the UNESCO Secretariat, a twice-yearly NGO Forum on a UNESCO priority issue.
- 2.2 UNESCO's Secretariat shall provide the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee with a financial contribution, the amount of which shall be determined at the beginning of each biennium in the work plan of the Secretariat service concerned. This contribution shall supplement the Liaison Committee's own resources.
- 2.3 The premises and secretariat facilities necessary for the meetings of the International Conference and for the work of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall, as far as possible, be provided free of charge by the Director-General. UNESCO's technical services will facilitate appropriately the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee meetings by setting up video-conferencing.

### **3. Collective consultations on specific subjects**

Collective consultations on specific subjects may be organized by the Secretariat with specialized NGOs, to ensure their contribution to the development and implementation of certain of UNESCO's priority programmes.

## **XII. Transitional measures**

1. The Executive Board shall be informed, at its 189th session, of the decisions taken by the Director-General that lie within her competence, and shall be informed for decision of matters within its own competence under these Directives. NGOs shall be informed accordingly of the decisions taken concerning them.
2. Agreements or exchanges of letters on general cooperation between UNESCO and NGOs other than those enjoying associate status shall end on 31 December 2012 after notification by UNESCO.
3. The practical arrangements for financial contributions provided for in section VIII.2.A shall take effect from the 37th session of the General Conference.