

## **CONTRIBUTION OF THE 2016 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF NGOS TO UNESCO'S 39 C/5 -**

(Adopted by the ICNGO on 14 December 2016)

In her circular letter of 18 April 2016, the Director-General opened a consultation on the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5). She invited NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in official partnership with UNESCO to participate. Some 84 responses from NGOs, foundations and other similar institutions were received by 20 May 2016.

In accordance with the Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations (2011), the 2016 International Conference of NGOs (ICNGO) was asked to submit a collective contribution to the Director-General.

It includes a short summary of responses from NGOs covering UNESCO in general and their cooperation with the Organization, as well as some proposals regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they might be integrated into the 39 C/5.

### **NGO's OBSERVATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR THE 39 C/5**

Most respondents identified three areas for highest priority: intercultural dialogue, consolidation of peace and the fight against all forms of discrimination; global citizenship education and the prevention of violent extremism; and education for sustainable development.

Other themes have been highlighted such as the promotion of culture and contemporary creative industries as key for building sustainable cities, regulations of new technologies and countering online hate speech.

In terms of target audiences, the majority of NGOs felt that highest priority should be accorded to young people. Others identified children displaced by conflict and disasters, early childhood, girls and women – especially mothers – as priority groups.

### **NGO's OBSERVATIONS ON MAJOR PROGRAMMES (in the light of an evaluation of NGO-UNESCO cooperation)**

**Education:** In terms of their cooperation with UNESCO, NGOs have privileged adult literacy and lifelong learning; teacher training; professional development of teacher-researchers with recognition of their professional and academic qualifications; access for all to quality education; gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women; multilingualism and the new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

**Natural Sciences:** NGOs gave special mention to their fruitful collaboration with the Man and Biosphere Program (MAB) and the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), highlighting their participation in COP21, the UN Conference on Climate Change. They specifically mentioned the importance of improving access to water in Africa as well as empowering women to play a greater role in managing this resource.

**Social and Human Sciences:** Some 64% of respondents felt their recent cooperation with UNESCO's programs for peace, intercultural dialogue, rapprochement of culture, gender equality and women's rights were important.

**Culture:** The majority of NGOs also emphasized cooperation for the safeguarding of cultural heritage and promoting diversity of cultural expressions, particularly on the Internet; their need to take into account local knowledge, and the struggle to counter the negative effects of modernization and the digital divide. They expressed wish for using the digital universe to create a space for dialogue and peace, rather than hate and distrust. To a lesser degree, NGOs also mentioned creative cities, urban development and the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict.

**Communication and Information:** It was in this area that respondents rated the results achieved with UNESCO's support as moderately important. Nevertheless, some projects and themes were singled out for their interest: the *UNESCO World Atlas of Languages*, the role of the media in building sustainable communities, gender equality and ethics, as well as support for developing media that are independent and socially responsible.

## **TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE NGO-UNESCO COOPERATION "39 C/5" AND "2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"**

The ICNGO meeting in Paris from 12 to 14 December 2016 agrees that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development together with its SDGs provides a new framework for development cooperation over the next fifteen years.

The 2016 ICNGO considers the 2030 Agenda to be of universal importance, reflecting a world in constant change and with a new awareness of the complexities and challenges facing development in the years ahead. It therefore proposes that the 39 C/5 should integrate the main directives of the 2030 Agenda into all its programmes.

In addition to individual NGO responses, the ICNGO:

**Welcomes** the fact that UNESCO as a specialized agency of the United Nations for education, has been asked to lead and coordinate with its partners the 2030 Education Agenda; and that it will implement a global, multi-stakeholder and inclusive mechanism devoted to Goal 4 (education) alongside all the other SDGs having implications for education.

**Considers** that UNESCO should have an important role to play in eight SDGs: SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). For its part, in keeping with its mandate, the ICNGO is totally committed to working with UNESCO through forums and major events to achieve gender equality.

**Reaffirms** the need to promote inclusion ("no one left behind") through the lifelong participation of everyone in the sustainable development process. The NGOs members of ICNGO will endeavour to build inclusive knowledge societies and promote universal access to information, especially through an appropriate use of technologies including for disabled peoples, linguistic minorities, people in remote areas, as well as other marginalized and vulnerable populations, so as to develop means for fighting illiteracy. Given the problems of exclusion arising from crises, conflicts, and displaced populations, education for resilience should be a major theme throughout the 39 C/5. The ICNGO also underscores the urgency of promoting implementation of policies to address the effects of climate change.

**Stresses** that peace, intercultural understanding, human rights and global citizenship are essential elements for UNESCO's programmes as they directly link with SDG 16, which commits the international community to fostering societies that are peaceful and just, free from fear, violence and inequalities. The ICNGO commits to upholding all non-governmental initiatives contributing to the following objectives: fostering education for a culture of peace and non-violence, and the rapprochement of cultures in formal and non-formal education; fostering education that promotes creativity, cultural diversity and highlighting the importance of heritage, particularly in the context of creative cities and the Memory of the World Programme.

**Recognizes** the cross-cutting importance of culture in the SDGs as a driver of sustainable development and **reaffirms** the importance of civil society's role in protecting and promoting cultural expressions.

**Also emphasizes** the need for the next C/5 to strengthen the participation of young people through the Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021). The ICNGO, together with its youth NGOs, commits to sharing its multidisciplinary expertise with UNESCO so as to give the means to both youth and youth-NGOs to participate in their society's and local communities life: formulation and review of policies together with young people; strengthening of capacity to transit into adulthood citizen engagement, democratic participation, social innovation, fight against discrimination and violent extremism... The ICNGO is also committed to foster formal and non-formal education as a means to achieve these ends.

Even though sports are not just for youth, the ICNGO will encourage every initiative that promotes sports in the service of peace and development within the framework of the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport.

**Finally reaffirms** the necessity of working with UNESCO in order to massively exploit the social media and new communication technologies to disseminate UNESCO priorities, ideals and programmes, given the double digital divide.

Taking into account the proposal from the participants in the sixth International Forum of NGOs in Official partnership with UNESCO (Querétaro, Mexico, 3-4 November 2016) to create an international network of youth for peace, the 2016 ICNGO intends to support every initiative of this kind.

In addition, the ICNGO expresses the wish to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the 2017 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). It also wishes that access to information and knowledge, online education, cyber sciences, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the ethical dimensions of the information society appear in the 39 C/5.

**Calls upon** UNESCO to continue and reinforce its cooperation with NGOs, and to recognize the importance of their contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda.