

**Outcome document from the
Working group on "Strengthening NGO-UNESCO Partnership"
under the aegis of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee**

**Theme 2 : GUIDE FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF FORUMS
OF NGOS IN OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH UNESCO**

1. This document has been drafted in accordance with the 2011 Guidelines for UNESCO's Partnership with NGOs adopted by the 36th General Conference (36C / Resolution 108). They recall the importance of the formal partnership between UNESCO and NGOs for the development and implementation of UNESCO's programs. In this context, the UNESCO-NGO Liaison Committee is required to organize *"twice a year, in consultation with the UNESCO Secretariat, an NGO Forum"*, which should focus on a priority theme of UNESCO's program. "

2. The UNESCO NGO partners of the Working Group "Strengthening Partnership between NGOs and UNESCO" propose to submit a guide to the LC for the organization of forums in order to (1) clarify the role of each actor, (2) intensify collaboration between NGOs and UNESCO (3) participate in the development and implementation of UNESCO's programs (Guidelines, Preamble -2).

Objectives of the forums

3. The forums should aim at bringing the voice of civil society associated with that of UNESCO in order to achieve their common mission within the framework of the programs of this institution.

4. They contribute to strengthening the NGO-UNESCO partnership and the visibility of UNESCO and the actions of NGOs.

5. According to the Preamble to the Directives, this partnership is essentially of an intellectual nature: the forums must contribute to the thematic reflections on UNESCO's programs. They must also bring out proposals for new themes in line with the programs, but based on concrete issues related to the field experiences of NGOs directly in contact with the population.

6. The forums should enable UNESCO's NGO partners, UNESCO and Member States to work in synergy, transparency and balanced collaboration for their preparation, development and monitoring.

The responsibilities of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee (LC), the Secretariat and the host country (as appropriate ¹)

7. The international forums of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO are the fruit of a collective elaboration between the 4 actors concerned: NGOs, UNESCO Secretariat and Sectors, and the host country. They must be a source of mutual enrichment.

8. Preliminary arrangements and technical preparation with the host country are the responsibility of the Secretariat.

9. NGOs propose a preliminary note for the forum to the LC. The LC then approves and submits it to the Secretariat. Next, a concept note is developed in collaboration with the steering committee which consists of the LC members, the Secretariat, the sectoral NGO focal points, the country host and the four NGOs designated by all NGOs involved in the forum.

10. The preparation of the program of the forum is the final responsibility of the LC in consultation with the host country and the Secretariat.

11. The preparation, translation and sending of invitations to participants are the responsibility of the Secretariat. Forum invitations are jointly signed by the Director General and the Chairperson of the International Conference of NGOs (ICNGO) and of the LC.

12. The translation and communication of working and information documents for the forum are the responsibility of the host country or the Secretariat.

Procedure for the choice of the forum theme

13. First and foremost the LC sets a framework which is in line with the document 39C/5 and UN priorities (SDGs for example) for NGOs to propose themes regarding the forums to come. This framework permits to inform all NGOs about the sectors' priority themes for the two years' mandate so that they are taken into account in their proposals.

14. Then abiding by the framework upstream, all NGOs may propose themes in consultation with NGOs working on the field (bottom-up process) and submit them to the LC and the Secretariat in writing a short preparatory note.

15. The LC, which represents the interest of NGO partners, then examines the legitimacy and coherence of the proposals in consultation with the Secretariat, in particular by avoiding the overlapping of several themes, and next approves the themes selected before the International Conference of NGOs.

16. Eventually, the LC proposes to all NGO partners, a choice of forums that will be ultimately approved by the ICNGO.

17. Then, each newly elected LC member will be responsible for one or more forums to which he/she will commit as NGO focal point.

¹ *Forums can be organized at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.*

Financing forums

18. The Secretariat has responsibility for seeking fund. NGOs could be associated with this process under the auspices of the LC.

19. A call to the Permanent Delegations for financial support could be considered by the Secretariat on the theme which will have been selected.

20. In particular, the Secretariat, the host country and NGOs must ensure that the funding chosen is in line with UNESCO's values and principles, which must also be reflected in the unfolding and the content of the forums.

Preparation of forums

21. In accordance with the Directives (XI.2-g), "the LC organizes, in consultation with the UNESCO Secretariat, the NGO Forums on a priority theme of UNESCO's program".

22. Reducing the number of forums over one mandate could allow more time to prepare the forums and facilitate the participation of high level speakers.

23. Following the ICNGO, the LC sets up a forum preparation group made up of NGOs from all regions, responsible for both the preparation and the progress as well as the follow-up of each forum. NGOs designate within this group a steering committee composed of at least three NGOs and two focal points from the Liaison Committee.

24. The Secretariat invites the sectors to participate in the preparation of the forum by organizing a meeting with the LC. NGO Focal Points will be designated by the sectors for the preparation of the forums as part of the Steering committee.

25. Through close collaboration between the Secretariat and NGOs as partners, all relevant actors work together by conducting in-depth reflections on the forum theme in accordance with one another's priorities. To do this, at least two NGO representatives of the Steering Committee, who are not members of the LC, could participate in the LC meetings' when the agenda's item on the forum is discussed.

26. The preparation group prepares a concept note in close consultation with the focal points of the sectors and the host country.

27. Local NGOs in the host country, official and non-official UNESCO partners are identified and invited to participate in the preparation of the forums, by giving priority to their possible intervention as speakers.

28. Objectives are set as early as the design phase of the forums, including for their follow-ups and forum evaluation indicators are clearly defined.

Forum proceedings

29. Forum programs are developed by the LC in cooperation with NGOs according to their clearly defined objectives and in consultation with the UNESCO Secretariat.

30. The presence of civil society actors, and in particular representatives of UNESCO's NGO partners, is ensured in all parts of the programs of the forums, including in the high-level panels. Stakeholders are thus selected in a balanced way among the stakeholders.

31. Young NGO partners are invited to work on the programs of the forums.

32. The NGOs of the host country participate in the organization of the forums and their development, as was the case for the Yamoussoukro forum which sets an example of collaboration between the State of Côte d'Ivoire and NGOs, which allowed for a successful follow-up and duplicable monitoring.

33. Member States, National Commissions, Field Offices and UNESCO Chairs and ASPnet (Associated Schools Project Network) are invited well in advance to increase their participation as well as Academics, UNESCO Clubs and other civil society actors.

Forum recommendations

34. The recommendations of the forums are written up by the NGO participants and must offer concrete ways for a possible follow-up of the forum.

35. They are published on all LC communication materials and transmitted to the Member States as well as to the Director General and the Secretariat.

36. The LC is responsible for communicating them on behalf of NGO partners at international conferences or events addressing the topic of the forum, and as widely as possible to all official NGO partners and other civil society networks.

Summaries and reports of the forums

37. A report on each Forum is written. It is sent to the Member States, the Director General, the Secretariat, the NGO partners and is distributed as widely as possible.

38. The LC, together with the Steering Committee of the Forum, must plan some sort of communication automatically on each Forum to highlight the role of UNESCO's NGO partners and the partnership.

39. A meeting of the Steering Committee, LC members, the Secretariat and the relevant sectors will produce a "feedback" document (lessons learned) from each forum based on an assessment with previously defined indicators. It will also aim to open avenues for collective reflection by NGOs with a view to participating in the development of UNESCO's programs as part of the CIONG contribution.

40. At the end of each forum, the participating NGO partners and UNESCO are to engage in a cooperation committed to the implementation of the forum's recommendations.

Forum follow-up

41. Depending on each type of forums, a follow-up implementation of the forum can be decided by NGOs of the preparation group. It does not take place under the aegis of the LC and can be considered from the initial design phase of the forum.

42. The NGOs concerned must invest in the long-term follow-up of the forums and coordinate with UNESCO (States, sectors) and NGOs in the field, particularly those involved in the preparation and running of the forums.

43. The follow-up of the forums aims to implement the recommendations of the forums. They aim to help feed UNESCO's programs in collaboration with the sectors that will be kept informed of their progress.

October 2019

Working Group on Strengthening the NGO-UNESCO Partnership

Responsible : Diego Gradis (Traditions pour Demain) from the Liaison Committee.

Group of NGOs responsible for drafting a proposal for a guide for the organization of forums

Responsible : Gabrielle de Milleville (Make Mothers Matter)

Steering group: Christian Breuil (CMA tlv), Lisbeth Gouin (Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Préscolaire), Christiane Johannot-Gradis (Traditions pour Demain), Maryvonne Kaiser (Union Mondiale des Organisations Féminines Catholiques), Maria Antonietta Malleo (International Fellowship of Reconciliation), France Marquet (South Asia Foundation), Christine Roche (Centre Catholique International de Coopération avec l'UNESCO), Marc Toillier (Union chrétienne internationale des chefs d'entreprises).

Participating NGOs: Marie Claude Allez (ATD Quart Monde), Jean Maurice Beaux , Elisabeth Birene (ICSW), Monique Bouaziz (Alliance Internationale des Femmes), Laurence de la Brosse (Association Internationale des Charités), Brigitte Chevalier (Religions pour la Paix), Vvien Deloge (Climat'Optimist), Barbara Despiney (Association Universelle d'Esperanto), Silja Fischer (Conseil Internationale de la Musique), Virginie Gansmandel (les Climat'optimistes), Jean Claude Guillemard (ISPA), André Jaegle (Fédération Mondiale des Travailleurs Scientifiques), Danielle Lévy (Alliance Internationale des Femmes), Bernard Loing (Traditions pour Demain), Elisabeth Markovic (Fédération Internationale des Femmes Juridiques), Magalie Noé (National Association des Cultures du Monde), Françoise Oriol (UATI.UISF), Ediola PASHOLLARI (World Assembly of Youth - WAY), Thibault Prevost (Climat'Optimist), Michel Thouzeau (Association Internationale des Educateurs pour la Paix).