

INTRODUCTION

The mandate of the Advisory Group of Presidents of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee (LC)- established by the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee at its meeting of 30 April 2021 - is to submit proposals to the Liaison Committee on how best to ensure a coherent and appropriate follow-up to recommendations 1 and 2 of the 2020 International Conference of NGOs (ICNGO), taking into account the need to involve the largest possible number of NGO partners.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the partnership between UNESCO, NGOs and Member States; foster collaboration with UNESCO's programme sectors, field offices, National Commissions and UNESCO centres.

Recommendation 2: Ensure the cohesion and proper functioning of the LC by monitoring the implementation of the three documents: forums guide, operating rules and code of conduct of the LC, adopted by the 2020 ICNGO; provide for the possibility of adjustments in conjunction with a working group on partnerships and, if necessary, submit them to the next ICNGO for approval. Propose an analysis of the implementation of the 2011 Directives after ten years of their publication.

In this respect, and to ensure a relevant reflection, the group has decided to first of all carry out an analytical and concise overview of the various actions and activities already carried out by successive Liaison Committees since the adoption of the Directives in 2011, including those undertaken and/or envisaged by the current Liaison Committee. Based on this overview, past actions and available documents, the group will then try to identify together some concrete avenues that could be submitted to the current Liaison Committee while responding to Recommendations 1 and 2 of the 2020 ICNGO.

Several documents and materials were used to support the Group's thinking, including:

- Activity reports of the Liaison Committee (2014, 2016, 2018, 2020)
- Rules of Procedure of the ICNGO
- Quadrennial Report by the Director-General on the contribution made to UNESCO's activities by NGOs (2012-2015) (38 C/34)
- Quadrennial report by the Director-General on the contribution made to UNESCO's activities by NGOs (2016-2019) (40 C/42)
- Executive Board documents
- Liaison Committee and UNESCO websites.
- Documents adopted by the 2020 ICNGO (Guide of the Forums, Operating Rules and Code of Conduct of the LC, Strengthening the partnership between NGOs and UNESCO, vade-mecum for new NGOs)
- UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and Programme and Budget 2022-2025 (41 C/4)

1 OVERVIEW

Since the adoption of the Directives in 2011, there have been 5 Liaison Committee teams: 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 (ongoing). The Liaison Committee in place in 2010-2012 coordinated the first steps of the implementation of the Directives, preparing the 2012 ICNGO and the development of the new Rules of Procedure (see below) in cooperation with the Secretariat.

As the Directives have introduced a requirement for geographical diversity in the composition of the Liaison Committee (NGOs from all regions are now represented on the Committee), successive teams have been more diverse, with NGOs from different regions and with different profiles, illustrating the richness of civil society around the world. Even if participation in the work has not always been easy for everyone, especially for elected organisations far from Paris, the gradual use of new technologies has made it possible over the years to increase the involvement of members in the Committee's meetings and to broaden the scope of the Committee's actions.

Guided in particular by the recommendations of the ICNGO that elected them and by UNESCO's priorities, the various Liaison Committees have all defined a strategy for their mandate and have each pursued efforts at different levels to strengthen cooperation with the Secretariat and develop interactions with Member States. They have also all shared and shown a common desire for increased visibility of the NGO-UNESCO partnership and collective cooperation and for improved communication with partner NGOs. Thus, the website has been renewed and updated over the years, and a Facebook page, a Twitter account, a LinkedIn account, as well as a YouTube page have been created, allowing a wider audience to participate in its events and to be made aware of its work, while forging new links, in particular "the LC letter" in 2016 and 2017, which was recommended for publication by the ICNGO.

In particular, the current Liaison Committee has reviewed and evaluated its means of communication with a view to harmonising the Committee's presence on the web and on social networks. A new website was set up in May 2021, which, in addition to a renewed look, will be updated regularly and will give visibility to the individual actions of partner NGOs who wish to do so, with a page now dedicated to the events of partner NGOs, which is regularly used by NGOs.

Five documents - operating rules, LC code of conduct, forum guide, strengthening dialogue with Member States, vademecum for new NGOs - were developed by a Working Group on Strengthening Partnership under the 2019-2020 mandate, and submitted to the 2020 ICNGO.

In accordance with Recommendation 2, the above documents served as a basis for action by the Liaison Committee, elected in December 2020.

The International NGO Conference (ICNGO) (2012; 2014; 2016; 2018; 2020)

The International Conference of NGOs (ICNGO), which meets every two years, is a statutory element defined by section XI.1 of the Directives. Its objectives include "reviewing the state of cooperation with UNESCO and facilitating cooperation between organizations with common interests".

After the adoption of the Directives, the dates of the conference were changed in order to ensure a better alignment between this mechanism and UNESCO's programming cycle and to encourage the involvement of the NGO community in this process. Thus, four ICNGOs were held in December 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2020 respectively, organised in close collaboration between the Secretariat and the successive Liaison Committees.

The 2012 ICNGO included the adoption of the revised Rules of Procedure of the International Conference under the aegis of the then Liaison Committee in collaboration with the UNESCO Secretariat, and the election for the first time of the Chairperson and members of the Liaison Committee in accordance with the new Directives and the modalities provided for in these Rules.

From a participation point of view, the 2012 ICNGO marked a turning point with a large participation of NGOs - 129 NGO partners represented compared to 70 at the previous conference - but also a growing interest of observers, other NGOs, foundations in official relations with UNESCO, and Member States. This new trend was confirmed at the following Conferences in 2014, 2016 and 2018 with similar participation rates and an increased presence of observers.

The 2020 ICNGO - the only one held entirely online - reported an even higher level of participation (150 NGO partners). The online format allowed for the participation of a larger number of NGOs in official partnership.

In terms of content, several elements stand out:

- Each ICNGO included in its programme and agenda sessions devoted to statutory matters (activity and financial reports of the Liaison Committee, elections, approval of recommendations, etc.) and sessions based on a theme linked to UNESCO's priorities, identified in consultation with the Secretariat¹.
- UNESCO's programme sectors were increasingly involved and present in the panels, as were representatives of Member States.
- The 2012, 2016 and 2020 ICNGOs approved and transmitted to the Director-General the collective contribution of NGOs to the preparation of the 37 C/4 and C/5, 39 C/5, and 41 C/4 and C/5 respectively.
- Each ICNGO approved a resolution at the end of its work, addressed to both the Liaison Committee and the NGO partners, as well as to the Secretariat, which will guide the roadmap and the main lines of collective NGO action in the next two years.

International Forums of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO (12 in total)

Since the adoption of the Directives, the Liaison Committee has organized twelve International Forums of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO on issues of priority to UNESCO (see list in the Annex), which have been the result of a collective effort shared by the Liaison Committee, NGOs and the Secretariat (with considerable and ongoing input from

¹ "Culture and cultures: reconciling universality and diversity"; "Re-enchanting the world with the post-2015 development agenda. A collaboration between NGOs and UNESCO"; "The challenges of the digital revolution for NGOs"; "Valuing the commitment and contribution of UNESCO's NGO partners"; "Envisioning a better and sustainable future: a new paradigm for civil society".

the Civil Society Partnerships Unit and programmatic involvement from the programme sectors), in some cases with the assistance and support of Member States.

The Forums are mobilising events to meet new partners, foster relations with States, build new networks and stimulate new projects and concerted efforts (e.g.: the hydrologists' training project following the Yamoussoukro forum). They have also enabled NGOs to be better informed of UNESCO's activities and priorities and to encourage them to promote newly adopted programmes and/or standard-setting instruments (e.g., the Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change and the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers, or recently Global Citizenship).

The document "Guide for the organization of International NGO Forums in official partnership with UNESCO" - submitted to the International NGO Conference 2020 - is the result of a collective reflection between the thematic working group set up on the reinforcement of partnerships and the Secretariat for its finalization. It constitutes a practical guidance document with pedagogical value for the organization of Forums, while respecting the functioning and regulatory frameworks of each stakeholder.

Celebration of International Days

Since 2013, the Liaison Committee has also supported collective activities of NGO partners around the celebration of certain International Days of particular relevance to UNESCO's mandate, including the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (in 2013), International Literacy Day (in 2014), Day of the Girl Child (in 2018) and the International Day of Peace (in 2014, 2018). Peace and Girl Child's Days are already planned for 2022, both at headquarters and in field offices.

CCONG/Education2030

The Liaison Committee is an ex-officio member of the coordination group of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (formerly CCNGO/EFA on Education for All).

Since 2015, the Liaison Committee has been regularly represented at CCNGO Coordination Group (CG) meetings and plays an active role in key events such as the UNESCO World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea in 2015.

Since the adoption of the recommendations of the 8th CCNGO-Education2030 world meeting (Recommendation 35 encouraging cross-sectoral engagement including through increased dialogue with the LC), CG (Coordination Group) members are invited to LC forums and the LC is invited to intervene in CCNGO meetings (Hammamet 2019, online 2011). The collective reflection working group on education, set up since 2017 under the aegis of the LC, works regularly and actively on consultations and contributions submitted collectively to the Steering Committee and now to the Global Cooperation Mechanism for Education. This group is intended to be open to new NGOs willing to work on education for collective and effective civil society advocacy at high level political meetings.

Participation in the Committee on Non-Governmental Partners (NGP) Committee

The Committee on Non-Governmental Partners (NGP) is one of the permanent committees established by the Executive Board, whose composition and terms of reference are determined by the Executive Board for each biennium. It examines questions concerning UNESCO's cooperation with NGOs and supervises the implementation of the Directives, and may, according to its terms of reference, conduct thematic debates on the contribution of non-governmental partners to UNESCO's action with the participation of members of the NGP Committee, representatives of NGOs, the Secretariat and/or invited guests.

The Chairpersons of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee have always participated in the sessions of the NGP Committee and have been regularly invited to speak on the collective work of the NGOs. They have also met regularly with the Presidents of the NGP and, when specifically requested by the NGP and its President, the Committee has played an active and constructive role in the implementation of the various decisions of the Executive Board and the reflections of the NGP Committee (e.g. on the dialogue between Member States and NGOs), making use of its capacity as a platform and intermediary between NGOs, the Secretariat and UNESCO Member States. Finally, the Recommendation on the resumption of thematic debates should be recalled².

According to the Directives, one of the functions of the Liaison Committee is to "contribute to the preparation of the Committee's debates on non-governmental partners of the Executive Board, including by ensuring, to the extent possible, the participation of a large number of NGOs". However, no thematic debates have been organised by the NGP Committee since 2014, as this decision was taken by the NGP Committee itself and the Executive Board.

Other activities

Other activities have been carried out over the last ten years, upon the initiative of several NGOs, in consultation with the successive Liaison Committees:

- Education, Sport, Cultural Diversity: New Attitudes to Promote Human Rights in the World", on 6 March 2014, with the participation of 800 young people aged between 18 and 35, in cooperation with Juventus Turin and relevant Programme Sectors.
- The Liaison Committees (LCs) have been mobilised and involved in the global reflection on climate change: initiating the drafting of a declaration in 2015, preparing a brief overview of the work of NGOs on climate change in 2018, organising debates and participation at COP-21, 22, 23 and a presence on an exhibition space at COP 21.
- In partnership with the Arab Institute for Human Rights (Tunisia), and the Qatari Committee for Human Rights, a group of NGOs celebrated with the LC the 70th

² 207 EX/33

"Invites the Chairperson of the Non-Governmental Partners (NGP) Committee, in close consultation with the Chairperson of the Executive Board and with the support of the Secretariat and the participation of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, to explore, as appropriate, how best to use the NGP Committee's terms of reference to promote its interactive policy dialogue with non-governmental organizations, including the organization of relevant thematic debates.

anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by organising an international seminar "Acting for Equality" in September 2018 in Tunis.

- The LC has supported other events such as the Humanity Photo Award Ceremony (Beijing 2013, Shangri-La 2015) organised by a member of the Asia region.
- The LCs have set up two working groups: the first on the "evaluation of the Directives" (2015-2016); this group, composed of some 30 representatives of 26 NGOs, has been working on the Directives. Three sub-groups worked on the status of NGOs, bilateral NGO/UNESCO activities and the collective cooperation of NGOs. Twenty-one remarks, observations and proposals were made and discussed with the Secretariat. The second was on "Strengthening the partnership between NGOs and UNESCO" (2019-2020). The results of this work were presented to the 2020 International Conference (including the one on strengthening dialogue with Member States submitted to the Chair of the NGP Committee (2019) and its President (2021); a follow-up is underway on the documents related to Recommendation 2 of the ICNGO.
- To reinvigorate the participation and contribution of NGOs, the Liaison Committee is organizing, with the support and active participation of the Secretariat, a series of regional webinars for NGO partners from different geographical regions (the first of which was held in October 2021 for Latin America and the Caribbean and the second took place in March 2022 for the Africa region, with the third planned for the Asia-Pacific region). These webinars aim to raise awareness among these organisations on the mechanisms and opportunities for collective cooperation with UNESCO and to foster their engagement with UNESCO.
- Following the recommendation of the last International Conference to "support, in cooperation with UNESCO Sectors, initiatives in the framework of the 75th anniversary of the creation of UNESCO to mobilize youth and promote the activities of NGOs since its creation", the LC decided that the best way to celebrate 75 years of UNESCO's action was to go beyond a simple celebration by calling on all NGOs in official partnership to put youth at the centre of their action. This initiative saw some 50 NGOs nominate a youth representative who worked on the development of a policy document addressed to partner NGOs. The UNESCO Section for Youth (SHS) expressed the wish that this work be continued.

41 C/4 and 41 C/5 (partnership dimension)

The 41st session of UNESCO's General Conference, held in November 2021, adopted UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2028 (41 C/4), which sets out four strategic and programmatic objectives for the Organization but also - for the first time - a "facilitating" objective aimed at "fostering more effective and efficient implementation of UNESCO's priorities". In particular, the Strategy recognises partnerships - including with NGOs - as a central tool that can contribute to this "enabling" objective as well as to "ensuring the Organization's responsiveness, preparedness and adaptability" in a rapidly changing context.

UNESCO's Programme and Budget for the period 2022-2025 (41 C/5) - also adopted by the 41st session of the General Conference - mentions UNESCO's relations with the Liaison Committee and the active support of its work and activities, including the Forums, as elements that contribute to supporting programme implementation and advancing the priorities of the Organisation.

2 ANALYSES

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the partnership between UNESCO, NGOs and Member States; foster collaboration with UNESCO programme sectors, field offices, National Commissions and UNESCO centres.

"Strengthening partnerships" has been at the heart of all the strategies implemented by each successive Liaison Committee since the adoption of the Directives. Thus, most past and current initiatives have been aimed at creating the conditions for a strengthened partnership and increased visibility of NGO action, with proven results and challenges still to be met.

The Liaison Committee cannot replace the individual responsibility of each NGO in official partnership to develop its own cooperation with UNESCO, with Member States or with other NGOs, through its own modalities and at the level(s) that best correspond(s) to it. Many examples of effective and fruitful partnerships exist and illustrate the variety and potential offered by the official partnerships, as attested by numerous testimonies on the UNESCO website, quadrennial reports, communications from the Liaison Committee, etc.

However, as a representative body whose role is to "ensure, by all appropriate means, the proper functioning and effectiveness of the partnership between the NGO community and UNESCO", the Liaison Committee can work to facilitate and create opportunities and conditions for effective collaboration between NGOs and the Secretariat and with Member States and other stakeholders. The Liaison Committee can draw on several modalities from its arsenal: mobilizing NGOs, connecting or networking with the different actors involved, through communication and visibility efforts, etc.

Mobilising NGOs

Mobilising NGO partners, supporting their engagement, and fostering interactions with other UNESCO partners or other civil society representatives, while ensuring the inclusion of as many NGOs as possible from around the world, are essential elements in creating an environment conducive to the development of rich and fruitful partnerships.

In this respect, the International Forums called for in the Directives have proved to be mobilizing meetings that create links and networks, including with other UNESCO partners (the most obvious examples are foundations maintaining official relations and clubs and associations for UNESCO). The Forums have also enabled the discovery of new partners and the activation and involvement of national and regional branches of partner NGOs. The LC does not have the human and financial resources to ensure the follow-up of each Forum, but it is up to each NGO to take advantage of it. Funding and hosting by a host country remain obstacles to the realisation of these Forums, as proven in various occasions. The organisation of two Forums per year, as recommended by the Directives, also remains a challenge.

The context of the pandemic that the world has faced over the last two years has also seen the emergence of new ways of working and meeting.

The growing number of participating NGOs over the years has shown that the ICNGO has established itself as a privileged meeting place for NGOs, the relevance of which has been confirmed. Furthermore, the unprecedented participation in the 2020 ICNGO- the only one to have been held entirely online - and the various feedbacks from the NGOs present suggest that the online format has enabled a greater number of NGOs - especially those further away from UNESCO Headquarters - to participate and confirms that the absence of some of these NGOs in the past was due to geographical distance or lack of financial means to participate. There is certainly an opportunity here to develop a formula that balances the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face and online modalities with the most equitable and effective participation possible. The 2020 ICNGO has already made a proposal regarding the elections, recommending to the LC (Recommendation 3) that "an online platform for the elections should be provided for the 2022 ICNGO, a tool that has proven to be efficient, fast and guarantees the integrity of the votes".

Cooperation between NGOs and the Secretariat

Real progress can be seen in the partnership with the programme sectors in the collective cooperation mechanisms. The forums address priority subjects for UNESCO and thus provide a good showcase and advocacy for the Organization. The sectors are more present and involved, both in the ICNGO and in the Forums, where they play a key role as members of the steering committees alongside NGOs and contribute to programme definition. However, it is debatable whether the Forums still have an effective contribution to the work of the programme sectors.

The "Regional Webinars" also represent an unprecedented opportunity to further strengthen and even establish new relations of the Liaison Committee, but also of the regional and national NGO partners, with the UNESCO Field Office network. In addition to raising awareness of the official partnership and the modalities of collective cooperation, these Webinars can give another dynamic to the official partnership by filling certain gaps (lack of knowledge of the NGOs in the region and of the resources of the regional offices, etc.) and by creating new synergies.

With the first "Regional Webinar" launched in 2021 in Latin America and the Caribbean and the second for Africa in early 2022, the Liaison Committee has a valuable tool at its disposal and a unique opportunity to mobilise NGOs and revitalise contacts with under-represented regions of the world. The upcoming webinars planned for other regions of the world are intended to contribute to this goal as well.

Lastly, the thematic collective consultations provided for in the Directives, which "may be organized by the Secretariat with specialized NGOs in order to involve them in the preparation and implementation of certain priority programmes of UNESCO", have been highlighted on several occasions (in particular in the work of the 2019-2020 Group on Strengthening Partnerships) as an interesting and under-exploited mechanism that could enable programme sectors to benefit from the expertise and mobilizing capacity of NGOs. An example is the CCNGO/ED, which is a unique collective mechanism for dialogue, information sharing and cooperation with civil society in education, and which is represented at the highest political level.

Similar initiatives on other UNESCO programmes could be developed, and it is of course up to UNESCO to decide on them according to its priorities and means. Advocacy in this sense could be carried out with the Programme Sectors.

Finally, it is also important to mention the contribution of NGOs to the programming cycle of the Organization. The Directives offer the NGO partner community the opportunity to "fully engage in the programming cycle" of UNESCO, by collectively voting on UNESCO's Draft Programme and Budget at the ICNGO. This is a valuable opportunity that recognises NGOs as a historical partner among UNESCO's wide range of partners. However, these contributions could be even more numerous with a more structured, upstream preparation, which also considers a broader engagement in the NGO community. An effort in this direction should be made at the next ICNGO, which will be called upon to prepare such a contribution.

Partnership between NGOs and Member States

The partnership of NGOs and the Liaison Committee with UNESCO's Member States provides a way to make NGO action more relevant at the global, regional, and local level. The Liaison Committee can contribute to this, on the one hand, by strengthening the institutional dialogue with States and by supporting and sustaining increased cooperation and exchange with National Commissions.

The Liaison Committee is seen as a privileged interlocutor of the NGO community by the Member States, as demonstrated on several occasions in the decisions of the Executive Board of UNESCO. It is also seen as a platform for interaction between States and the NGO partners themselves, and a constructive promoter of NGO/Member State dialogue.

Cooperation with National Commissions

Over the years, it has been difficult for partner NGOs to interact effectively with the National Commissions, in some cases aggravated by a climate of mistrust or prejudice towards NGOs in general, in certain regions or countries.

When the Forums were organised outside Paris, they enabled the Liaison Committee and certain partner NGOs to have close and unhindered exchanges with the host country and in particular with its National Commission. However, these situations are rare and limited in time, and only in exceptional cases, such as in Côte d'Ivoire, has there been a continuation of the dialogue and follow-up with the State concerned.

It is therefore important for the Liaison Committee to seize as many relevant opportunities as possible to advocate for a closer partnership with NGOs with the National Commissions, by meeting with them and, if possible, intervening in their meetings. The Committee could play a dual role, explaining and sharing its own work while making the National Commissions aware of the actions and expertise of NGOs on the ground.

Further reflection by partner NGOs or the Liaison Committee could be undertaken on the reasons behind the current lack of interaction of partner NGOs with National Commissions, as well as on possible ways to support and promote this important partnership.

The NGP Committee of the Executive Council

The regular and active participation of the Chairpersons of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee and its members in the meetings of the NGP Committee, as well as the privileged and direct exchanges with the Chairperson of the NGP Committee, remain important in order to continue to give visibility to the collective work of NGOs and to illustrate the relevance of NGO action to the Member States, as well as to nurture positive relations between NGOs and Member States.

The resumption of the thematic debates of the NGP Council as recommended by the NGP Committee in 2019 and at the 40th session of the General Conference could effectively contribute to the dialogue between NGOs and States. It should be recalled that, in accordance with resolutions 38/C71 and 39/56, the Executive Board has addressed the issue of dialogue between Member States and NGOs on several occasions (200th, 202nd and 204th sessions). In addition, a survey was conducted among Member States and NGOs (2018 -2019). This subject has also been brought to the attention of the Liaison Committee, which has presented its views on several occasions, in particular with the document "Strengthening the dialogue between NGOs and UNESCO Member States" submitted to the NGP Chairpersons and the Secretariat.

Should thematic debates be reorganized by the NGP Committee, as recommended by the States (207 EX/33), the Liaison Committee in office would have to ensure that it contributed to them, by involving NGOs and ensuring the participation of as many NGOs as possible, in accordance with the mandate conferred on it by the Directives.

The ICNGO

As underlined by States, for example in the decisions of the Executive Council, and as highlighted also by the work of the 2019-2020 Group on Strengthening Partnership, the ICNGO represents a unique platform to foster opportunities for exchange between Member States and NGOs, as also evidenced by the growing interest and participation of Permanent Delegations as observers or as speakers at certain sessions.

Thus, the 2022 ICNGO - for which preparations are likely to start soon - would be an ideal opportunity to make the best use of the ICNGO platform to foster concrete interactions with Member States and to promote a constructive and open dialogue between NGOs and Member States.

Communication and visibility

The issue of communication and visibility is not part of the mandate of this advisory group. (Recommendation 3 of the 2020 IGC.)

However, a good visibility of the work of the NGOs and the Liaison Committee goes in the direction of strengthening the NGO/UNESCO partnership. In this respect, the efforts made over the years by the various Liaison Committees, including the new website set up in 2021 by the current Committee, should be highlighted. Similarly, the presence, involvement and participation of the Chairperson of the Committee and/or members of the Committee in events whenever possible and relevant, both inside and outside UNESCO, are valuable tools to make the Liaison Committee and, by extension, the NGO partners, visible.

Of course, there is always room for improvement (e.g.: the current Committee is working on harmonising its communication on social networks), and a lack of proactive communication seems to have been felt among NGO representatives during the period of health crisis and isolation.

Recommendation 2: *Ensure the cohesion and proper functioning of the LC by monitoring the implementation of the three documents: Forum Guide, Operating Rules, and Code of Conduct of the LC, adopted by the 2020 ICNGO. Provide for the possibility of adjustments in conjunction with a working group on partnership and, if necessary, submit them to the next ICNGO for approval. Propose an analysis of the implementation of the 2011 Directives after ten years of their publication.*

Cohesion and good functioning of the LC

The Liaison Committee is now increasingly recognised as an essential interlocutor in the framework of NGO/UNESCO cooperation: by NGOs (partners and non-partners), the Secretariat and many States. The proper functioning and cohesion of the Committee are essential to ensure the continuity of this role as an interlocutor.

The smooth running of the Committee depends on a number of factors, not least the individual commitment of the representatives of the NGO members of the Committee, in a spirit of constructiveness and progress, and taking into account the personalities of everyone. We are well placed to know that all the teams that have succeeded one another since the adoption of the directives have each had their own way of working, and have had individual successes that have helped to build the work and image of the Liaison Committee, while at the same time facing certain difficulties.

The purpose of the two documents - operating rules and code of conduct of the Liaison Committee - is to provide a framework for optimising the functioning of the Committee. It is up to the Liaison Committee itself to monitor the implementation of these documents, to examine them and to decide on any follow-up action to be taken in consultation with the NGOs.

It must also be recognised that the geographical diversification introduced by the Directives has brought about profound changes in working methods. While in the past the remote participation of members has sometimes been difficult, today the use of new online working and meeting arrangements allows all Committee members to participate in and contribute to its work, while also providing a more cost-effective solution for NGOs to participate.

This diversification is extremely important and allows the expression of different sensitivities within the Committee, as well as drawing on different experiences and knowledge of UNESCO (Headquarters/Field Offices, international action/regional action,

advocacy/fieldwork). It is also true that members from other regions sometimes find it difficult to find their place in the Committee and their skills could be better used. Reflection on the role of each member of the Committee would perhaps allow them to benefit more from this regional diversification, for example that of "ambassador" to make the work of the Committee better known and to work with the other NGO partners of UNESCO in the region.

Analysis of the implementation of the 2011 Directives

In 2011, the Directives introduced several important changes and innovations in the NGO-UNESCO partnership, including a real revitalization of collective cooperation, which now frame UNESCO's cooperation with NGOs.

In 2015 and 2016, a working group of NGOs examined the "evaluation of the Directives" and produced a document that presented a series of specific proposals on certain provisions of the Directives, which were discussed at the time with the Secretariat and within the Committee itself.

The Director-General's quadrennial reports presented to the General Conference every four years on the contribution that NGOs have made to UNESCO's work constitute a kind of "narrative" of the collective cooperation and work of the Liaison Committee. They also deal with the implementation of the Directives. They are probably not well known to NGOs.

*In this context, an NGO-led reflection on the implementation of the 2011 Directives could focus on the substance of the partnership resulting from the Directives and identify best practices and lessons learned since their adoption in 2011.

As only the States can make changes to the Directives, it goes without saying that care should be taken to ensure that this NGO reflection does not open a debate on changes to the Directives, risking calling into question the achievements made so far.

This reflection could of course be shared with the Secretariat and would feed into the NGO-UNESCO partnership.

3 Proposals of the Advisory Group of Presidents to the LC

Based on the above, it is encouraging to note that the successive Liaison Committees from 2011 to 2022 have already undertaken a great deal of thoughtful work on the issues addressed by the 2020 ICNGO Recommendations.

The current Liaison Committee has also taken many initiatives to foster partnership between NGOs and UNESCO: Regional Webinars, revision of the website and platform for NGOs and cooperation with the programme sectors for the Forum.

It seems therefore unnecessary to repeat this work and the previous reflections, but rather to enrich them. In this context, it seems to us that, during the current mandate, in addition to its efforts to strengthen its partnership with the Secretariat and to bring it closer to the Programme Sectors and Field Offices, the Liaison Committee could usefully focus on the following aspects, for which we propose some initiatives to follow up on Recommendations 1 and 2.

It goes without saying that other initiatives could be considered and that other issues raised in the analysis would also merit further investigation. However, we believe that the

proposals outlined below are feasible, constructive and appear to be in line with the vision of the 2020 ICNGO Recommendations.

It will be up to the Liaison Committee to examine these proposals and, if it accepts them, to define the modalities for their implementation.

FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATION 1

Mobilisation of all NGO partners

Proposal:

Continue efforts to make participation in the International NGO Conference (ICNGO) 2022 as equitable, broad, effective, and inclusive as possible, building in particular on the lessons learned from the ICNGO 2020. In this context, consider and explore, in close cooperation with the Secretariat, a hybrid participation that balances the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face and online modalities.

This initiative would also be partly in line with Recommendation 3 of the 2020 ICNGO, which calls on the LC to "provide for an online platform for the elections for the 2022 ICNGO, a tool that has proven to be efficient, fast and ensures the integrity of the votes".

Cooperation with National Commissions:

Proposal:

In view of the in-depth global reflections undertaken in the past (in particular by the 2019-2020 working group on strengthening the partnership) and in order not to duplicate this work, it would be useful to launch a more targeted reflection on the causes of the lack of interaction, bilateral or collective, of partner NGOs with the National Commissions for UNESCO. This is an approach that, in our opinion, deserves to be further developed and could help to identify possible ways of strengthening and promoting this important partnership. A working group could be set up on this subject.

It goes without saying that we nevertheless recommend that the Committee endeavour, as far as possible and where applicable, to ensure the most inclusive and diverse participation of NGO partners, taking advantage in particular of current technological means, to encourage and give an opportunity to every NGO that wishes to express itself.

Dialogue NGO - Member States

Over the past five years, the NGP Committee of UNESCO's Executive Board and the NGOs themselves have been reflecting on ways to improve the dialogue between NGOs and Member States. One of the solutions considered was the revival of thematic debates within the NGP Committee, but this is not currently envisaged by the latter or on its agenda. In any

case, it is clear that the Committee should be prepared in the future to contribute to thematic debates, should they eventually be organised by the NGP Committee³.

However, we also see other opportunities that NGOs could already seize. In this regard, it may be recalled that in 2018, during the consultation of Member States on the Member States/NGO dialogue conducted by the Secretariat, a large number of Member States surveyed considered that the ICNGO was a "mechanism that could foster opportunities for exchange between Member States and NGOs, in particular with regard to the contribution of NGOs to the mandate and priorities of the Organization" (207 EX/33).

Thus, in the context of the preparation of the 2022 ICNGO, for which preparations are due to start shortly, the Committee could use the ICNGO platform to consider including a genuine space for constructive and open dialogue between NGOs and Member States.

FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATION 2

Application of the documents

The group noted that the LC is reviewing these documents for evaluation.

Reflection on the implementation of the Directives

Proposal:

With regard to the reflection on the implementation of the Directives concerning UNESCO's official partnership with non-governmental organizations, we propose to concentrate this reflection on a few specific sections directly relevant to the NGO partner community, involving as many NGOs as possible.

Such a reflection could focus on the application, successes and challenges encountered, of modalities of collective cooperation of NGO partners particularly relevant for the NGO/UNESCO partnership, and for better efficiency and agility as recommended in the global partnership strategy (206 EX14), including for example:

The contribution of NGOs to UNESCO's programming cycle (Section VII of the Directives): that of the ICNGO and that of individual NGO partners.

The contribution of NGOs to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, in an intersectoral manner, in UNESCO's fields of competence and within the framework of its Transformative Strategy in the face of the growing challenges.

Strengthening the dialogue between NGOs, the UNESCO Secretariat and Member States at the international, regional, national and local level for efficient and focused cooperation and the achievement of the SDGs.

³ *In accordance with resolutions 38C/71 and 39/56, the Executive Board addressed the issue of dialogue between Member States and NGOs at its 200th, 202nd and 204th sessions, and a survey was conducted among Member States and NGOs (2018-2019). The NGP Committee of the Executive Board of UNESCO and the NGOs themselves have initiated a reflection on how to improve the dialogue between NGOs and Member States.*

The "Thematic Collective Consultations", a tool that we have found to be particularly little used since the adoption of the Directives (Sections XI.3 and VI(g) of the Directives);

April 2022

Mr Patrick Gallaud (President 2013-2014),
Ms Martine Lévy (President 2015-2016),
Mr Philippe Beaussant (President 2017-2018),
Ms Marie-Claude Machon Honoré (President 2019-2020)
Mr Davide Grosso (current President)

ANNEX

List of the International Forums of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO

- First Forum: "What Education Goals for Tomorrow's World Citizens?" (UNESCO Headquarters, September 2013)
- Second Forum: "Access to Water for All in Africa" (Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, July 2014) with the support of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and its National Commission
- Third Forum: "The Role of Youth in Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage", hosted by the Sozopol Foundation with the support of the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO (Sozopol, Bulgaria, September 2014)
- Fourth Forum: "The Role of Women in the Fight Against Poverty" (UNESCO Headquarters, June 2015)
- Fifth Forum: "Bridging Cultures: One Humanity Beyond Diversity" (Beijing, People's Republic of China, July 2015) with the support of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO
- Sixth Forum: "From Promotion to Construction of Peace with NGOs" (Querétaro, Mexico, November 2016), with the support of the Government of Querétaro
- Seventh Forum: "Youth and Social Impact" (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, May 2017) in partnership with the MiSK Foundation
- Eighth Forum: "Changing Minds, Not the Climate: The Contribution of NGOs" (UNESCO Headquarters, December 2017) with the support of the Kenn Foundation
- Ninth Forum: "Another Look at Migration" (Tunis, Tunisia, September 2018) hosted by the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) and placed under the high patronage of the Head of the Tunisian Government
- Tenth Forum: "Science, The Common Good of Humanity" (Moscow, Russian Federation, November 2018) in partnership with the Russian Peace Foundation and the Russian Academy of Sciences, and with the support of the MiSK Foundation
- Eleventh Forum: "Challenging Inequality" (UNESCO Headquarters - December 2019)
- Twelfth Forum: "Achieving Global Citizenship" (online December 2021)