

## **Working Procedure of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee**

The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee (LC) was established by the Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations of 2011 as the executive body for the International Conference of NGOs Official Partners to UNESCO (ICNGO).

The Membership and purpose of the LC is described in the 2011 Directives. The LC operates under the chairmanship of its President, elected by the ICNGO for a two-year mandate, to implement the programme the candidate presented at the ICNGO, and for which they were elected.

### **Section I – MEETINGS**

1. A minimum of three meetings per year are organized.
2. Apologies for absence are presented to the members of the LC in the spirit of collaboration and respect. Members of the LC are encouraged to have their alternate representative substitute the main representative in case of their absence from LC meetings.
3. Meetings are held in English and/or French. An effort is made to ensure meetings are productive and focus on the points of the agenda, with the intention of making fast, constructive, and well-informed decisions.
4. Meetings should, except in case of emergency, be decided by the President in consultation with the Vice-President, with dates to be arranged on the basis of an electronic consultation sent by the President or Secretary to members of the LC. This should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, at least two weeks before the first proposed date. Members should respond to the consultation within 72 hours, with the final date of the meeting then communicated to all members within 24 hours, based upon the maximum preference identified in the consultation.
5. In consultation with the Vice-President, the President should prepare a draft agenda including a point of "Other Business", which should then be distributed to the LC at least one week in advance. Members of the LC have 48 hours to propose any point, by a communication sent to the President.
6. The Secretary should send working documents, together with the final agenda, to all members at least 72 hours before the meeting.
7. Meetings will be held in person or online, with hybrid meetings the norm. Attention should be paid to equity and respect in giving the floor and time to all members of the LC, for the sake of collective work and open dialogue.
8. A representative of the UNESCO Secretariat is invited to attend all meetings. They assess which points of the agenda should be addressed by the LC internally.
9. The Vice-President acts as President in the absence of the President.
10. The quorum for a meeting to take place shall consist of least half of members of the Committee plus the Chair.
11. Regarding the decision-making process, consensus should be sought as often as possible. Otherwise, a majority vote of those in attendance is necessary to decide on the issue before the LC. In case of a tie, the President shall hold the deciding vote.
12. In case there should be a vote held and approved during a duly convened meeting that has less than the aforementioned quorum, the chair of the meeting will circulate an email to the absent members asking them to also vote on the matter within 72 hours. The vote on the proposition will be final when the voting period has expired, and all votes counted.

## Section II – MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS

1. Minutes of LC meetings are taken by the Secretary or, in absence of the Secretary, by any other person appointed by the President. After consultation with the President, the Secretary shall distribute the draft minutes to members of the LC within two weeks. Those members who attended the meeting have a maximum of a week to approve or suggest amendments to the minutes. The President shall then circulate the amended version of the minutes, with observations made by the members in attendance, within 7 days. Copies of the recording of each meeting should be made available to all Committee members upon request.
2. The distributed minutes are submitted to a vote of adoption, by those members who were actually in attendance for the meeting in question. Any observations regarding the minutes which may not have been approved may be stated *in extenso* in the minutes of the meeting in question.
3. Once approved, a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting shall be posted on the LC website, ahead of the next meeting.
4. The Secretary is responsible for assuring that LC records are maintained.

## SECTION III – COMMUNICATION & REPRESENTATION

1. LC members should be duly consulted on important documents to be communicated externally such as important correspondence, intervention before UNESCO governing bodies, contacts with outside institutions, etc.
2. The LC is responsible for sharing communications about the collective activities of the NGOs, using their communications channels.
3. The President oversees communication to third parties and representation of the LC and may delegate, in consultation with the Vice-President, elements of communication or representation to other members of the LC on an ad-hoc basis. The President should report to the LC at the next meeting significant communications undertaken, and participation in events attended since the last meeting.

## SECTION IV – FINANCES

1. The Treasurer oversees accounting and reports at each meeting on the financial situation of the LC.
2. All decisions with financial implications are made by the members of the LC, either during meetings or by consultation by the President. In the latter case, responses to the consultation should be received within a maximum of 48 hours.
3. The Committee can agree a timeframe and specified budget within which the President can be delegated financial authority for a specific need.

## SECTION V – WORKING GROUPS

1. The Liaison Committee will convene thematic Working Groups in accordance with the recommendations made by the ICNGO and the needs of the LC, and provide clear mandates and timelines for activity<sup>1</sup>. Recognising the need for clear communication and accountability,

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<sup>1</sup> This does not apply to the working group on education as the Liaison Committee has an institutional seat in the Coordination Group of the CCNGO-Education2030 and collectively contributes as a constituency to the advocacy of CSOs on Education at the HPL of the Global Cooperation Mechanism and in all major education events"

this avoids confusion by establishing working instructions, timeframe, and deadlines for reporting and conclusion, or renewal of mandate.

2. The coordinators of these thematic Working Groups shall report regularly to the LC on the progress of the work of their group. They should inform the LC of all contacts made within the UNESCO Secretariat, or with persons, institutions, or NGOs not in official partnership with UNESCO who may contribute to the activities of the Group on an exceptional basis.
3. All communication from the thematic Working Group, other than to its own members, should be approved and distributed by the LC.

## **Code of Conduct of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee**

### **Preamble**

The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee (LC) was established by UNESCO's 2011 Directives concerning partnerships with non-governmental organisations. The LC shall:

- In accordance with the mandate provided by the International Conference of NGOs (ICNGO), the LC shall represent NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO in a fair and unbiased way, in its collective interactions with the Secretariat, Member States, and the UNESCO community at large;
  - Engage with the public, funders, donors, and other interested parties that share the common values of UNESCO to promote the role and work of NGOs at UNESCO
  - Work beyond the borders of politics, ideology, creed, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, or any other power differentials
  - Be accountable to public scrutiny regarding its governance structure, activities, projects, and policies that it may propose or oppose;
  - Be accountable for, and publish the sources and use of its financial resources
  - Be accountable for its actions and decisions to NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO

Any candidate for election to the LC, or individual candidate for the Presidency of the ICNGO must agree to the principles and rules of this Code of Conduct, and commit themselves to following this Code of Conduct if so elected.

### **Integrity and Trust**

- The LC shall act independently yet collaboratively in accordance with the principles, objectives and values of UNESCO. It shall govern itself autonomously, according to its governance structure and working procedures adopted by the ICNGO, and keep control over its own activities, which shall be consistent with its mission.
- Where issues of concern are raised with the President by an NGO in Official Partnership this should, where possible, be treated in confidence if so requested by that NGO. This does not absolve the President of primary responsibility to the LC, as well as existing legal obligations.
- Representatives of NGOs who also serve as members of a Member State Permanent Delegation, or serve within the UNESCO Secretariat may not serve on the LC
- Representatives of NGOs serve on the LC on a voluntary basis. No funds held by the LC may personally benefit its members, or any private individual, outside of mandates decided by the LC.
- LC members shall endeavour to participate in all LC meetings, and participate in the activities of the LC. All members shall endeavour to fulfil all tasks and responsibilities with which they have been entrusted.
- Members of the LC shall raise, at the earliest opportunity, any possible or potential Conflict of Interest between their personal situation and their membership of the LC as representatives of their NGO.
- The member should recuse themselves from any discussion with regards the implication of the Conflict of Interest. Any member of the LC who has stated a Conflict of Interest, and having withdrawn from further discussion on this topic, must be counted as absent in any vote regarding the implications of this Conflict of Interest.
- This should occur on each occasion such Conflict of Interest may arise, when decisions are made by the LC, or during their implementation. This clause shall also apply to the President of the LC.

### **Communication**

- Using its Communications channels and platforms, the LC shall make available to the NGOs and to the general public its activity reports, its financial report and the minutes of its meetings.
- As far as may be possible, all official texts and general communication shall be circulated or published in English and in French.

### **Financial Matters and Fundraising**

- Financial procedures shall be agreed by the LC for the receiving and disbursement of funds, ensuring probity, accountability, and safeguarding against Conflict of Interest.
- The LC shall only accept funding that is consistent with its mission, and which does not compromise the principles of UNESCO or the LC. Furthermore, no funding may be considered from any source which seeks to restrict or limit the LC's ability to address relevant issues freely, thoroughly, or objectively.

### **Partnership and Collaboration**

- The LC shall collaborate with entities when such relationship is consistent with its mission.
- The LC shall enter into agreements with governmental or intergovernmental bodies only when such agreement will be beneficial to the objectives of the LC and UNESCO, and such agreement does not jeopardise the independence of the LC.

### **Spirit of Collaboration between LC Members**

- LC members shall act with respect and transparency on all issues, with regards other LC members, and any other person. Furthermore, they shall seek to participate in collective decision-making in the interest of all NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO and with the highest standards of collective and collegiate behaviour.
- LC members will respect views of other LC members in discussions and debates at meetings whether physical or by any virtual means of communication, and will contribute in a positive and constructive spirit to collective decision processes in the interest of the NGOs.
- Regarding the decision-making process, consensus should be sought as often as possible. Otherwise, a majority vote of those in attendance is necessary to decide on the issue before the LC. In case of a tie, the President shall hold the deciding vote. The number of votes cast For, Against, and Abstaining should be recorded, though this shall be recorded anonymously.
- For the sake of collegiate responsibility and cohesion, once a majority vote has been adopted, members of the Committee should publicly represent this position, rather than risk undermining the position of the LC or its work.
- Communication between LC members shall be as wide and free as possible, ensuring well-informed decision-making processes. Constructive evaluations and reviews of activities will inform ongoing procedures and future activities, benefiting the LC collectively.
- LC members will respect confidentiality of discussions which take place during meetings, plenary sessions, or in any other meeting or activity.
- Members of the LC shall, both individually and collectively, endeavour to resolve any inter-personal issues or conflicts of personality or position which could prove detrimental to the work, reputation, or working practice of the LC.