Sub-Group 2: Structure, composition and methods of work of UNESCO’s International and Intergovernmental Bodies (IIBs)

**Draft Recommendations**

I. **Vision and principles**

1. Sub-Group 2 recommends endorsing the vision of a more integrated, harmonized, coherent, and adapted system of International and Intergovernmental Bodies (IIBs) working closely with Member States, relevant partners, and each other in support of the Organization’s objectives, medium-term strategy (C/4), and programme and budget (C/5), taking into account the specificities and requirements of individual mandates.

2. While recognizing the immense value of experts to the work of UNESCO, the intergovernmental nature of the IIBs needs to be reinforced. Thus, transparency and awareness-raising measures should be strengthened across the board. The work of IIBs must be as inclusive as possible and seek to involve Member States for greater impact and visibility.

II. **General recommendations for all International and Intergovernmental Bodies (IIBs)**

**Efficiency (mandate, composition, structure, rules of procedure, methods of work)**

3. IIBs are invited to update their mandates, as appropriate, including their objectives and programs to be more coherent with approved C/5 priorities and responsive to current global developments, such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

4. To promote diversity and inclusivity, voluntary term-limits of two consecutive mandates are recommended for IIBs which currently do not have term limitations for membership.

5. As a general rule, term-limits of two consecutive mandates for membership in all Bureaus are recommended.

6. For cost-saving, coherence and harmonization, it is recommended that IIBs and the General Conference consider “right-sizing” the composition of the IIBs.

7. There is a need to reduce and manage politicization of nominations and decisions.

8. To enhance visibility and the effectiveness of the work of the IIBs, more effective information-dissemination is recommended through updating and enhancement of websites and outreach to all involved actors, including Member States and their National Commissions.

9. Earlier preparation and dissemination of draft agendas and preliminary timetables, mainly by using the same template containing hyper-links to documents to be adopted/discussed in sessions.

10. Simple, more user-friendly documentation (i.e. less fragmented reporting and easier document tracking; annotated agenda with hyper-links to reports and draft decisions). **The Secretariat is invited to revisit UNESCO’s "Strategy on Knowledge Management and Information & Communication Technology" with a view to promoting a harmonized virtual working environment for all IIBs.**
11. Open-ended informal consultations on draft decisions to promote inclusive and effective decision-making.

12. It is recommended that the Rules of Procedure of the IIBs be amended, when relevant, to advance the deadline for submission of candidatures to their subsidiary bodies from 48 hours to seven days before elections.

**Harmonization (role of Bureaus, transparency)**

13. The role, composition and procedures of Bureaus and their members should be clarified and harmonized through codification in rules of procedure/statutes or development of general guidelines for all IIBs, in close cooperation with the Secretariat.

14. It is suggested that Bureaus’ composition be set, as much as compatible with individual IIBs’ mandates, at a maximum of six members (Chair, Rapporteur, and four Vice-Presidents from the six Electoral Groups).

15. **The intergovernmental nature of Bureaus should be reaffirmed while maintaining expert engagement. In this regard**, the attached guidelines on responsibilities of Bureau members are recommended for dissemination to all Governing Bodies and IIBs.

16. Documents related to Bureau meetings should appear online before meetings take place; outcomes, including reports of Bureau meetings, should be communicated to all members, and as appropriate, all Permanent Delegations, in a timely manner.

17. Elections of Bureaus should be held, as much as possible, soon after elections for seats on the IIBs conducted at the General Conference, to avoid having Bureau members from Member States which are no longer members of the IIBs concerned.

18. As much as feasible, Bureau meetings should be open to observers and working methods made more transparent.

19. Strengthen information-sharing, communication and collaboration between Bureaus, Intergovernmental Councils and Committees and Member States.

20. Gender-neutral language be adopted throughout all UNESCO documents.

**Alignment with overarching priorities of UNESCO**

21. All IIBs should have the opportunity to submit formal inputs to the mid-term strategy C/4 and the draft programme and budget C/5 documents of UNESCO.

22. A feedback mechanism can be envisaged for substantive dialogue between Member States and IIBs, beyond the limited reporting to the General Conference. This could be through information meetings or briefings. Reporting to the General Conference should be enhanced through a new more strategic and results-oriented reporting format to be followed by debate and General Conference resolutions to provide feedback to IIBs.

23. Orientation sessions for new members of all IIBs, especially for Chairpersons and Bureau members, should be institutionalized and include introduction to the C/4 and C/5 frameworks. To that end, a short user-friendly guidebook including good practices and acronyms could be produced to familiarize members with working methods and C/4 and C/5 mechanisms.
Coherence, coordination and synergies

24. Balanced resource allocation is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of all IIBs.
25. Use of languages for inclusivity and effectiveness remains an important objective.
26. IIBs and their Secretariats are requested to enhance coordination in scheduling of meetings to avoid overlap.

Best practices

27. Best practices should be shared and replicated or, if necessary, adjusted to reflect specificities with the aim to promote governance mechanisms that facilitate strategies and action plans anchored on the C/4 and C/5. Attached, in this regard, is a non-exhaustive list of best practices identified by the Working Group.

III. Specific recommendations for the Intergovernmental Councils and Committees

28. Explore the possibility of holding annual Council sessions for the bodies which do not meet annually, taking into account cost implications.

International Hydrological Programme (IHP) Intergovernmental Council

29. a. Explore intersessional dialogue mechanism
   b. Enhance coordination between Headquarters and Field Offices on IHP issues.
   c. More inclusive use of working languages.

Man and the Biosphere International Coordinating Council (MAB-ICC)

30. a. Strengthen role of ICC vis-à-vis Bureau in terms of decision-making.
   b. Enhance dialogue between ICC and International Advisory Committee (IAC) to strengthen implementation of decisions at national level.
   c. Decisions be better highlighted in reports and preparation of separate draft decisions in advance for each item on agenda.
   d. Need to enhance visibility of the MAB programme and the UNESCO MAB website.

Management of Social Transformations Programme Intergovernmental Council (MOST IGC)

31. Enhance cooperation with IFAP and MAB.

Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS)

32. Greater synergies with the Education Sector explored to avoid duplication.

Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), International Bioethics Committee (IBC), World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST)

33. a. In reviewing the three IIBs as a related cluster, IGBC, IBC and COMEST are invited to continue adjusting and/or updating their mandates, roles and working relations in a holistic manner, looking at other models of UNESCO expert bodies reporting to intergovernmental bodies.
   b. Consider adjusting, as appropriate, the number of members in each IIB in view of avoiding duplication of efforts and achieving cost efficiencies.
Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP)

34. a. Bureau meetings should be closed only when handling sensitive issues.  
b. Increase Secretariat support.

Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)

35. a. Reaffirm the intergovernmental nature, especially of the Bureau, while retaining expert engagement.  
b. Develop clear, objective criteria for approval of projects.  
c. Examine roles of Bureau and Council in selection of projects.  
d. More balanced consideration of six priorities, including capacity-building.

Intergovernmental Council of the Information for All Programme (IFAP)

36. Presentation and discussion of report to the Executive Board could be improved.

Headquarters Committee

37. Holding of one information meeting per year to update delegations on its work.

IV. Specific recommendations for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

38. a. More balance in use of working languages, especially for documentation.  
b. Consider establishing the same six Electoral Groups, like other IIBs in UNESCO

V. Specific recommendations for the UNESCO Conventions

Convention against Discrimination in Education and Conciliation and Good Offices Commission

39. a. States Parties of the Convention and its Protocol reflect on utility of Conciliation and Good Offices Commission, and decide whether to continue with the status quo or take additional measures.  
b. The CR Committee and the Legal Committee be requested for their views on the matter.

Convention against Doping in Sports

40. a. Enhance synergies and coordination between Bureau of Conference of Parties and the Social Sciences Sector.  
b. Enhanced cooperation with other organizations, including during MINEPS conferences, encouraged to promote visibility.

Cultural Conventions

41. A more balanced approach in terms of equitable financial and human resource allocation for all cultural conventions was called for, considering their importance to the mandate of UNESCO. All cultural conventions are in need of additional resources to fulfill their objectives fully.
42. The Secretariat handling each Convention should have at least three permanent posts.

43. Governing Bodies of the Conventions, through broad consultations, are invited to further explore, as appropriate, harmonization of rules of procedure and coherence in decision-making procedures, taking into account their respective mandates and specificities. They can consider best practices from the environmental treaties/ UNEP to further develop synergies in organizational matters, information-sharing, and cost-efficiency.

44. Meetings of the Chairpersons of the Committees of the Cultural Conventions can be more interactive and action-oriented. Chairpersons should work strategically together to address common themes and challenges and consider shared responses and cooperation.

45. A closer relationship between Governing Bodies of Conventions and the General Conference is desirable, including through the opportunity to provide inputs to the C/5.

46. Transparency and accountability measures can be enhanced, such as dissemination of minutes/ key results of Bureau meetings.

47. Capacity-building and common training on all cultural conventions should be strengthened.

48. Governing bodies of Conventions and their Secretariats are encouraged to develop appropriate ratification strategies.

49. The Conventions’ relations and cooperation with other international entities and initiatives should contribute to visibility, impact, and fundraising, without compromising UNESCO’s core competencies.


50. a. Equitable rotation of Committee members is encouraged.
    c. Streamline periodic reporting system.


51. Reinforcement of staff supporting Convention.

**Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)**

52. Called on to ensure a balanced and representative World Heritage List.

**Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)**

53. a. Capacities of Secretariat should be enhanced to promote, inter alia, wider ratification.
    b. More secondments from Member States should be encouraged.

**Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)**

54. Need to strengthen decision-making procedures and credibility of Committee, taking due note of Ad Hoc Working Group established to address these issues.

55. a. Analyze means to increase the number of projects approved each year, including ways to increase extrabudgetary funding and voluntary parties’ contributions.
   b. Enhance capacity-building programs and visibility.

VI. Specific recommendations for International Fund, International Programmes, and International Expert Bodies

56. Expert bodies and programmes need to strengthen transparency and information-dissemination measures, especially on appointment procedures and criteria, qualifications of members, methods of work, terms of reference, key programmes, results/deliverables, and follow-up of recommendations.

57. In general, visibility and relations with the General Conference and Member States need to be improved. In this regard, an appropriate feedback mechanism for Member States to provide inputs/suggestions to these bodies, beyond limited reporting to the General Conference, should be considered. Information meetings or placing dialogue with these bodies on the agenda of the Executive Board could be options.

International Fund for the Promotion of Culture (IFPC)

58. More information on Administrative Council, impact of selected projects, and availability of resources be made available.

International Basic Science Programme (IBSP)

59. a. Enhance and update website.
   b. Enhance outreach to Member States, including dissemination of reports on work of Scientific Board.

International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP)

60. a. Enhance and update website.
   b. Strengthen reporting to General Conference and Executive Board.
   c. Intensify synergies and cooperation with MAB and WHC.
   d. Continue to expand avenues for North-South and South-South cooperation.

Executive Committee for the International Campaign for the Establishment of the Nubia Museum in Aswan and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo

61. Updates from the Executive Committee on implementation of its mandate were noted.

International Advisory Committee of the Memory of the World Programme (IAC MoW)

62. The decision of the 201st Executive Board on this item is noted.

VII. Specific recommendations for the Category 1 Institutes

Abdus Salam Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)

63. a. ICTP submit a regular report to the General Conference, highlighting impact of its work and connections to UNESCO’s Natural Science programme and 2030 Agenda.
   b. Follow-up of the External Auditor’s recommendations.
Education Category 1 Institutes

64. To improve transparency and information dissemination, more systematic and coherent presentation of the work of the Education Category 1 Institutes to the Executive Board and Member States is recommended, considering that allocations from the Regular Budget support the Category 1 Institutes.

65. In this connection, enhancing visibility and interaction with Member States, through appropriate feedback mechanisms, such as periodic dialogues or orientation and information meetings is suggested.

66. Dissemination of information on selection, procedures, and key decisions of Governing Boards to all Member States is desirable.

67. Updating of websites to improve information-sharing is necessary.

68. The functional autonomy of Education Category 1 Institutes has to be maintained.

69. Mapping of assets/ contributions of Category 1 Institutes for implementation of SDG4 would be a valuable tool to enhance synergies and impacts.

70. Harmonization and updating of statutes and procedures is timely. The Secretariat, Member States and relevant Governing Bodies should continue to engage on this issue.

71. Balanced support to the Category 1 Institutes has to be promoted to maintain their important roles and contributions, not only regionally, but worldwide.

72. Meeting of Chairpersons can include the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS).

73. Education Category 1 Institutes are encouraged to closely cooperate on relevant issues.

74. The internet site of the International Institute for the Capacity-building in Africa (IICBA) should be made available in French, and the English version of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) website should be improved.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

75. UIS participate in Structured Financing Dialogues.

VIII. Follow-up mechanism

76. The General Conference is invited to consider an appropriate follow-up mechanism to promote implementation of the Working Group’s recommendations (from both Sub-Groups 1 and 2), such as production of a compendium or guidebook of best practices.

77. Governing Bodies and IIBs can be requested to continue to take up the matter of governance reform in their respective agendas and to submit reports in this regard to the 40th session of the General Conference.

78. The Secretariat should develop a costed and time-bound follow-up plan with a clear overview of the division of labour and the responsibility for implementation, and a progress report should be submitted to the 40th session of the General Conference.
79. Recommends to the General Conference to consider to extend the mandate of the Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO, for the next biennium 2018-2019, with the aim to examine:

a. All the subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board.
b. The follow up of the implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group, of the External Auditor and of IOS approved by the 39 General Conference.
c. The working methods of the Secretariat with the purpose to improve its efficiency and transparency.
d. The harmonization and coherent adaptation of all UNESCO bodies with the priorities approved in the framework of the C/5.
ANNEX 1

GUIDELINES

Responsibilities of Representatives of Electoral Groups in Bureaus

Background

Member States elected to a governing or subsidiary body of a UNESCO intergovernmental Programme or Convention, the Executive Board, as well as statutory meetings of State Parties, delegate certain tasks to a smaller representative body, namely the Bureau.

In principle, the Bureau consists of Member States or individuals from Member States elected to represent Electoral Groups. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs, on the other hand, are understood to also serve in their personal capacities. Election to a Bureau as a representative of an Electoral Group should be seen as an honor and therefore carries with it important duties. The scope and tasks of Bureaus vary depending on different Rules of Procedure, but the responsibilities of Bureau Members vis-à-vis their mandates as Electoral Group representatives have not been clearly defined.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance to enhance transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO, these Guidelines aim to promote good governance, common ownership, and shared responsibility of Member States in a holistic manner.

Guiding principles

- Bureau members should act in good faith and actively engage with respective Electoral Groups and their members.

- They should promote UNESCO’s values and ideals, and work in a spirit of dialogue, cooperation, inclusiveness and trust-building

- They should abide by highest standards of equity, fairness, transparency and accountability.

General responsibilities

- Bureau members should be mindful that they represent their respective Electoral Groups.

- They should communicate with the members of their respective Electoral Groups in timely, transparent and effective manner, through correspondence by electronic means or by organizing coordination meetings, to promote efficient information-sharing and dissemination.

- They are called upon to consult with their respective Electoral Group members on the items on the agenda of the Bureau, soon after they are announced.

- If possible, they shall seek to consolidate the position(s) of their respective Electoral Groups on items to be discussed at Bureau meetings.

- They shall also present positions of concerned Member States of their respective Electoral Groups on relevant agenda items, when requested, at Bureau meetings.

- They shall inform promptly about the outcomes of Bureau meetings, complementing the summary of Bureau meetings when distributed.

- They shall update their respective Electoral Groups regarding all Agenda items and emerging issues after and in-between Bureau meetings.
ANNEX 2

Non-exhaustive List of Best Practices of IIBs

Bureaus

- Minutes of Bureau meetings posted online (IHP)
- Participation of observers in Bureau meetings (MOST-IGC, IFAP, 1954 Convention)
- Close work between Bureau and Council (MOST-IGC)
- Working meetings of Bureau with civil society (2005 Convention)
- Election of Bureau at end of session (2005 Convention)

Documentation

- Action Paper which outlines key issues and expectations (IOC)
- Annotated agenda (IOC)

Decision-making

- Informal consultations prior to meetings facilitate decision-making (IHP)
- Mechanism for introduction of draft resolutions through Drafting Committee (IHP)
- Development of criteria for selection of projects (IFAP)
- Sharing of draft amendments in advance (2005 Convention)
- Open Working Group during Committee sessions allowing for inclusive and transparent discussions on major issues (1972 Convention)

Efficient working methods

- Management of agenda to allow for ample discussions (IGBC)
- Good use of consultations among members between sessions (CIGEPS)
- Terms of reference for working groups (IFAP)
- Transparency between Member States and Secretariat (HQ Committee)
- Responsiveness to requests from Member States (HQ Committee)
- Ad Hoc Working Group (1972 Convention)
- Periodic reporting (1972 Convention, 2005 Convention)
- Organization of Exchange Day which provided opportunity for thematic discussions (2001 Convention)
- Regular reporting to Executive Board (UIS)
- Minutes of Steering Committee distributed (UIS)
- Making use of silent procedure as appropriate (IPDC)
- Continued monitoring of the state of conservation throughout the year (1972 Convention)
- Implementation of IOS’ recommendations (2005 Convention)
- Satisfaction survey (2005 Convention)

Composition

- Re-election possible only once on IGGP Council

IT

- Use of social media and IT, i.e. video on IHP;
- Use of information technology; i.e. all resolutions and amendments are immediately placed online (IOC)
• Online training programs of International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP)
• A web page with a whole set of knowledge management tools for all stakeholders (1972 Convention)

**C/4 and C/5 alignment**

• Efforts to align with C/4 and C/5 (MAB ICC)
• Comprehensive MOST Strategy;
• Strategic planning (MAB Lima Action Plan),
• Results framework being developed for the Convention streamlined into reporting (2003 Convention) against C/5 Expected Results (2005 Convention);
• Priority-setting exercise (IOC, 2005 Convention)
• Consultations on exit strategy, upon fulfillment of objectives when National Museum in Cairo becomes fully operational (Nubia Executive Committee)

**Synergies**

• Good use of regional networks (MAB-ICC)
• Joint meetings that build synergies and reduce costs (IGBC, IBC, COMEST)
• Joint meetings of Chairs (IGBC, IBC, COMEST, Cultural Conventions)
• Multi-stakeholder approach promoted through UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity (IPDC)
• Extensive cooperation with other international organizations (IOC)
• Merging of Geosciences and Geoparks programme (IGGP)
• Involvement of local communities and international scope of activities (IGGP)
• Extensive support of Global Geoparks Network (IGGP)
• Cooperation of IICBA with Headquarters and Field Offices

**Information dissemination/visibility**

• International Support Group meetings (MAB-ICC)
• Information meetings to communicate regularly with Member States (IOC, 1970 Convention)
• Region-specific meetings to promote awareness-raising and ratification (2001 Convention)
• Periodic reporting (1972 and 2005 Convention)
• Fund mobilization strategy (UIS)