

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

AD HOC GROUP OF SECRETARIES-GENERAL OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS  
TO PREPARE A DRAFT CHARTER OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

Unesco House, Paris, 10 - 13 January 1978

SUMMARY OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE NATIONAL COMMISSIONS ON  
THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT CHARTER OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

INTRODUCTION

1. The inter-regional meeting of Secretaries of Nationals for Unesco, held in Ottawa, 23-27 June 1975 ("Ljubljana II"), discussed several possibilities of strengthening the National Commissions. While the meeting agreed that Article VII of the Unesco Constitution does not reflect accurately the present or proposed responsibilities of National Commissions, it recognized that National Commissions would not become transformed automatically, merely by having their functions described in the constitution more fully. The meeting considered that the strengthening of National Commissions is a task that should be undertaken both by the governments and by the Secretariat and that the National Commissions offered unique advantages to Unesco in the UN system.

One of the suggestions made by the "Ljubljana II" meeting with a view to the strengthening of National Commissions was that a National Commissions declaration or charter might be prepared. The charter would reflect the importance of National Commissions; it would be expressed in practical and concrete terms; and it would replace the kind of resolutions adopted at past General Conferences which may be losing their effectiveness.

2. The General Conference, at its nineteenth session, adopted resolution 7.41 whereby the Director-General was authorized : "... (b) in consultation with National Commissions, to prepare a draft charter of National Commissions to be submitted through the Executive Board to the General Conference at its twentieth session for approval".

3. In pursuance of this resolution and as foreseen in the work plan (paras. 7119 and 7120) of the Approved Programme and Budget for 1977-1978, a preliminary draft of the Charter was prepared (annex I) and was sent to National Commissions under cover of circular letter CPX/NAC/NC/64 of 2 August 1977, inviting their comments and suggestions.

4. By 7 December 1977, forty replies to the above-mentioned circular letter had been received by the Unesco Secretariat.

5. Ten National Commissions, i.e. those of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jordan, Mexico, Nepal, Spain and Zambia, stated in their replies that they supported the preliminary draft Charter and proposed no amendments.





6. The National Commissions of the following countries sent more detailed comments, and proposed amendments to the structure and substance of the preliminary draft Charter, and/or made suggestions concerning the procedure to be followed in its preparation: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Romania, Seychelles, Sudan, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, USSR, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and Yugoslavia.

Many of the views expressed by these Commissions on the preliminary draft are critical, considering i.a. that the text as a whole is not sufficiently mature as a base for a charter, or that it is too long, too vaguely worded, insufficiently structured and that it omits some important considerations. In the replies of these National Commissions, proposals are made both concerning the procedure to be adopted in the preparation of the draft Charter and on the purpose, status, structure and substance of the draft.

7. The preliminary draft Charter was also discussed by two sub-regional meetings: the sub-regional meeting of West and Central African National Commissions (Ouagadougou, Upper Volta, 23-25 August 1977), and the sub-regional meeting of East, Southern African and South Western Indian Ocean National Commissions (Tananarive, Madagascar, 4-8 October 1977). The recommendations of these meetings on the draft Charter are enclosed as Annex II.

8. In the following, an attempt is made to summarize the comments and proposals of a more general order in the replies of the National Commissions to circular letter CPX/NAC/NC/64 of 2 August 1977 as well as the recommendations of the two above-mentioned sub-regional meetings. A list of the comments of individual Commissions to different paragraphs in the preliminary draft Charter is enclosed as Annex III.

#### PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE CHARTER

9. The above-mentioned meetings in Ouagadougou and in Tananarive recommended that the preliminary draft should be examined by a group of experienced Secretaries-General representing each region, and that a new draft Charter of National Commissions for Unesco be prepared for submission through the Executive Board to the General Conference at its twentieth session for approval.

10. The National Commissions of the following countries either supported the above-mentioned recommendation of the two sub-regional meetings or made similar suggestions as to the procedure to be followed in the preparation of the draft: Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mauritius, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Republic of Tanzania, Yugoslavia.





COMMENTS ON THE PURPOSE AND THE STATUS OF THE CHARTER

11. A number of National Commissions consider that the Charter should primarily be regarded as a guideline intended mainly for newly established and inexperienced National Commissions (i.a. Denmark, Japan and the USSR).

12. Many other Commissions consider the Charter to be of primary importance for the strengthening of the National Commissions in general, and that there should appear "a clear expression in the draft that it will signify a new stage in the action and existence of National Commissions" (Iran).

13. The National Commission of France suggests that the Charter should recall the legitimacy of National Commissions, and that it should deal with their role, their attributes, their tasks and the obligations of both the Governments and the Secretariat of Unesco in respect of the Commissions. The National Commission of Italy considers that the draft refers in a too vague fashion to legislative and administrative structures of the National Commissions and to their concrete work, and thinks that the draft does not reflect the desirable trend of development of the Commissions as a means whereby Unesco can increase the efficacy of its programme, and that it constitutes a step backwards from the resolutions of the nineteenth session of the General Conference.

14. The Swiss National Commission is of the opinion that the Charter should explain in a clear, complete and precise fashion what the National Commissions are or should be. The Polish National Commission stresses that the Charter should in the first place define the fundamental tasks of the National Commissions in a general, but in a concrete and precise manner in accordance with the Constitution of Unesco and the resolutions of earlier sessions of the General Conference, and the Romanian National Commission observes that the Charter should "stipulate the status and role of National Commissions as consultative organs to their governments called upon to promote international co-operation in the fields of Unesco's competence".

15. The National Commission of Yugoslavia points out that there are three possible purposes for which the Charter could be prepared and applied, i.e. for the purpose of assisting the National Commissions to acquire a better position and role at the national level, to illustrate the experience of thirty years of Unesco activities (i.e. the activities of the Commissions) or to clarify the position and the role of Member States, of international culture and intellectual co-operation, as well as the development and transformation of Unesco based on a new form of engagement on the part of the Member States in the work of the Organization as the real bearers of international co-operation. In the view of the Yugoslav Commission, the last-mentioned alternative is closest to its own view concerning the Charter, which should neither have a solemn character nor be primarily an expression of a will to assist the National Commissions.





The Commissions should not be regarded as organs instituted by Unesco - which impression is now given in the preliminary draft - but as national organs within the full competence of each Member State. On the other hand, there is a need for a document expressing the needs and aspirations for decentralization and of a consolidation of the position of Member States. From this point of view, the Charter should be studied in the context of other Unesco documents.

16. The United Kingdom National Commission considers that the purpose of the Charter should be to assist Member States in understanding what can be expected of a National Commission, to spell out in broad terms the administrative arrangements needed for the realization of these expectations and to give guidance to individual members of National Commissions on their responsibilities. The Charter should be "brief, practical and readily comprehensible to busy officials who have little knowledge of Unesco". The Canadian Commission also stresses that the Charter should be addressed to decision-makers in the public sector in Member States, and that its object should be to explain and persuade, as clearly and lucidly as possible in terms of essential principles which might guide Member States in discharging their obligations as signatories of the Constitution of Unesco and about the possibilities of maximizing the returns for the Member States from their membership in Unesco. The document should demonstrate the way in which National Commissions are useful to Member States both in respect of services at the national level and also at the global level for international peace and the common welfare of mankind. The Commission of the Federal Republic of Germany proposed that in the new draft, the Constitution of Unesco should be brought into relation with the working level of the National Commissions. The inter-relations between Unesco, the National Commissions, governmental authorities, Permanent Delegates, non-governmental organization, etc. should be made clear in a precise form.

17. As to the status of the Charter, many Commissions stress that it is the prerogative of the Governments in each Member State to establish the legal status, structures and methods of co-operation of each Commission (i.a. Japan, Romania, the USSR). This is, in fact, reflected in paragraph 2 of the preliminary draft. The Charter should, therefore, be in the nature of a recommendation. The National Commissions of Denmark, Finland and Japan consider that the Charter should have no legal status, nor be legally binding on Member States, suggesting that the document be called a "Guideline" instead of a "Charter".

18. On the other hand, some Commissions consider that the Charter should be of a more binding character, Papua New Guinea, for instance, pointing out the constitutional requirements for the purpose of giving effect to the Charter, when it has been approved by the General Conference.

19. The National Commission of the United Kingdom points out that great care must be taken to distinguish in the Charter between matters of general application and those matters of specific detail and methodology, which must be left to individual Member States.





20. The sub-regional meeting of East, Southern African and South Western Indian Ocean National Commissions for Unesco (Madagascar, 4-8 October 1977) recommended that the Charter, though not a legal document, should be accepted as a document upon which the co-operation between the National Commissions and Unesco can be based.

#### COMMENTS ON THE STRUCTURE AND SUBSTANCE OF THE CHARTER



21. The majority of the National Commissions express the hope that the Charter should begin with a preamble and continue with clearly structured operative chapters. Some Commissions have made concrete proposals for the structure of the Charter, a summary of which is attached as Annex IV to this document. It appears from the majority of these and other proposals that the following points are regarded as basic elements of the Charter :

- A definition of the purpose and role of National Commissions (as laid down in the Constitution and the resolutions of the General Conference)
- The creation and establishment of the Commissions (mainly as reflected in paragraph 2 of the preliminary draft)
- An indication in general terms of the composition of the Commissions with stress on the representation in them of the authorities and bodies mentioned in paragraph (1) of Article VII of the Constitution
- A more precise elaboration of each of the functions of the Commissions as advisory, liaison, executive and information bodies at the national and international levels
- The co-operation between the National Commissions themselves at all levels
- The relationship and the support/obligations of the Governments with respect to the Commissions (including facilities, staff, financing in general)
- The relationship and the support/obligations of Unesco with respect to the Commissions.

22. Many National Commissions (i.a. Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, New Zealand, Yugoslavia) refer to Article VII of the Constitution as the fundamental basis of the Charter and of the definition of the purpose and the role of the National Commissions. Canada is of the opinion that "the Charter should begin with a preamble, which relies heavily on the Constitution of Unesco, including particularly the fifth and the last preambular paragraphs and Article VII (1) and (2)". Some Commissions (i.a. Mauritius, Poland) also propose that reference should be made in the preamble to resolutions of the General Conference concerning National Commissions. On the other hand, the National Commission of Tanzania considers "that most of the draft - e.g. references to the Unesco Constitution and resolutions of the General Conference - is, however, a restatement of already known facts" and suggests that such references should constitute only a small fraction of the Charter in its preambular part.



23. Some National Commissions (i.a. the German Democratic Republic, Poland, the USSR) propose that the role of the National Commissions should also be defined as participation in the realization of the objectives of Unesco as expressed in Article I of the Constitution, and that it would be desirable to reproduce the text of this Article in the Charter. In addition to this, the Commissions of the German Democratic Republic, the USSR and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam propose that the Charter should engage the National Commissions to work for the solution of contemporary international issues, such as the consolidation of world peace and international security and détente, disarmament, the elimination of colonialism and racism, the establishment of a new international economic order and the development of equitable and mutually advantageous cultural, educational and scientific co-operation.

24. As to the establishment of the National Commissions, it is pointed out in the majority of the replies that this is solely a matter for the government of each Member State (see also the comments under paragraph 17 above).

25. In respect of the composition of the National Commissions, a number of National Commissions consider that the indications about the composition of the National Commissions in the preliminary draft are too detailed and that they should be expressed in more general terms mainly on the basis of Article VII (1) of the Constitution and recognizing the right of each Member State to make its own decisions in this respect. New Zealand, for instance, while recognizing the right of each Member State "to make such arrangements as suit its particular conditions for the purpose of associating its principal bodies ... with the work of the Organization", also believes that Unesco should provide positive leadership in this area.

26. There appears to be broad agreement about the need for a clear and precise definition in the Charter of the various functions of the Commissions as advisory, liaison, executive and information bodies, and that each of these aspects should be developed in the Charter. Some important aspects of these functions are, however, regarded as missing in the present draft. Such aspects are :

- The role which many National Commissions play in their own countries by undertaking important domestic activities on their own initiative in the fields of activity of Unesco (i.a. Austria, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy)
- The increasing role of the National Commissions in the planning and evaluation of the programme of Unesco (i.a. Austria, Iran, Poland, Romania, Sudan)
- The increasing role of National Commissions as instruments of international co-operation (i.a. the German Democratic Republic, Poland)
- The role of National Commissions in the decentralization of Unesco's activities (i.a. the Netherlands) and their functions in relation to the Regional Offices of Unesco and the UNDP Resident Representatives (Poland, Sudan)
- The co-operation between the National Commissions and the Permanent Delegates to Unesco (i.a. the Federal Republic of Germany, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago).





27. On the other hand, many National Commissions (i.a. Austria, Finland, Japan, Netherlands, the USSR) consider that the extension of the role of the National Commissions to social and economic planning and development, as mentioned in paragraph 9 of the preliminary draft, is not acceptable and that it is beyond the competence of the Commissions and beyond the competence of Unesco within the United Nations system.

28. Many National Commissions (i.a. Poland, Romania, Trinidad and Tobago) also point out that the co-operation between the National Commissions themselves at the sub-regional, regional, and inter-regional levels should be given a specific place in the Charter.

29. As regards the support and the obligations of the governments with respect to the National Commissions, many Commissions point out that increased emphasis should be given in the Charter to the fact that the effectiveness of the functions of the National Commissions depends on qualified, permanent staff, as well as on adequate resources and technical equipment (i.a. Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany). The sub-regional meeting of East, Southern African and South Western Indian Ocean National Commissions (see Annex II) recommends in this respect that greater emphasis should be placed in the Charter on paragraph 15 of the preliminary draft, which should be further expanded.

30. Many Commissions also consider that the support and obligations of Unesco with respect to the National Commissions are not reflected nor explained sufficiently clearly in the preliminary draft. This concerns both the responsibilities of Unesco towards the National Commissions in matters such as consultation in the selection of experts, the involvement of National Commissions in programme activities, etc. (the United Kingdom), fostering the development of the Commissions by providing advice, services and training, and by ensuring that 1% of Part II of the Programme and budget, exclusive of staff costs, is allocated to co-operation with National Commissions (Trinidad and Tobago), as well as a proposal from the sub-regional meeting in Tananarive (Madagascar) that the Charter should state categorically that the National Commissions are entitled to supplementary financial assistance under the Participation Programme of Unesco.



ANNEX I

PRELIMINARY DRAFT  
NATIONAL COMMISSIONS CHARTER

1. The National Commissions for co-operation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization were established in accordance with Article VII of the Constitution of Unesco for the purpose of associating the government bodies and principal national groups interested in education, scientific and technical research, culture and communication with the preparation and execution of the Organization's programme.
2. The National Commissions are established by the Governments of Member States; their legal status, structures and methods of operation are laid down in accordance with the cultural, socio-economic and political conditions which prevail in the individual Member States.
3. Despite a wide variety of statutes and structures, there is a basic similarity linking all the National Commissions in common adherence to the Organization's ideals and in a common faith, faith in international co-operation. Their primary function is to ensure that the great principles of justice and mutual understanding affirmed by the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of Unesco are universally known, sink into the consciousness of the peoples of the world, inspire governments and contribute in particular to the elimination of racism and colonialism, to the promotion of human rights, the establishment of a new international economic order and the achievement of lasting peace in a more united world.
4. These great ideals would be in danger of remaining a dead letter if they did not take material form in activities, achievements and projects which by their concrete nature make those ideas more accessible to the public. Neither the National Commissions nor the governments which established them can underestimate the extent and importance of the responsibilities with which they are thus morally and materially invested.
5. In the National Commissions set up in its Member States, Unesco has an effective means of stimulating those countries' interest in the Organization's ideals and programme, and also of keeping abreast of their national situations and aspirations in regard to its fields of competence.
6. Without the support of the National Commissions, Unesco's action in the Member States might be impoverished and the universality of the Organization impaired.





The status of the National Commissions in each country should be such as to enable them to exercise high material and moral responsibilities, and concomitantly their activity should justify the eminence of their position.

7. In each Member State, the establishment of a National Commission is an act of government which involves the passing of a decree or law, as the case may be. Whether the National Commission has fully governmental, semi-governmental or autonomous status, it maintains, by force of circumstances, close links with the administration. Its incorporation in the administrative apparatus is also a matter for government decision. The most important factor to be taken into consideration in this decision is that the National Commission should be provided with the advantages of the broadest possible inter-ministerial co-operation, flexible at the administrative level and of interdisciplinary co-operation at the level of competences.

8. Whatever their status, structures and methods of operation, the National Commissions fulfil four main functions: consultation, liaison, execution and information.

9. The National Commissions act in an advisory capacity to the government and to the national delegation to the General Conference in all matters relating to Unesco and its programme. This role is not limited to the classic activities of education, science, culture and communication but also extends to social and economic development and planning. This function is exercised primarily during the preparation of the Organization's programme and budget and of its draft medium-term plan and later during the implementation of the activities approved by the General Conference.

10. The National Commissions, acting in their advisory capacity to the governments which have established them, have a duty to be fully informed of the activities within their competence at the national and international levels. In exercising this responsibility they come to act as liaison bodies on these two levels. To this end, they must:

at the national level, establish permanent links with the government bodies concerned and maintain constant relations with study or research centres, institutes, universities, professional associations or trade unions, and with the national branches of the non-governmental





organizations on the one hand and, on the other, with national experts in the fields of education, science, culture and communication;

at the international level, act along similar lines particularly in relation to Unesco and their counterparts in all other Member States.

11. The National Commissions also exercise functions of execution by participating in nationally inspired activities or projects with national or international implications carried out under contracts concluded with Unesco. The participation of the National Commissions in the execution of the Organization's programme gives meaning and substance to international co-operation conducted at sub-regional, regional or inter-regional levels in a wide variety of forms and fields. The exchange of persons, the preparation and exchange of material and exhibitions, the setting up of joint study groups on problems of mutual interest, the organization of joint meetings, and the preparation and implementation of joint programmes or projects concerning the respective Member States are all activities in which the National Commissions must show a spirit of enterprise and innovation and give concrete form to intellectual co-operation and the free exchange of cultural values, obviously with a view to mutual enrichment.

12. Wherever their position, the National Commissions should endeavour to be as widely representative as possible. The recruitment of their members is not confined either to one ministry or to the category of civil servants alone. If they are to have a balanced structure, their membership must include, in addition to members appointed by governments, representatives of parliaments, institutions and non-governmental organizations and persons representing the fields of education, science, culture and communication, and also representatives of trade unions and the economic and planning sectors, so as to be in a position to discharge their responsibilities by the pooling of resources.

13. The Secretariat of a National Commission cannot cope alone with responsibilities so numerous and varied. In order to secure from those who are the life-force of the nation the co-operation which is essential to its work, the Commission must disseminate information which carries convincing weight both by its volume and by its quality. The dissemination of Unesco's ideals and activities should be one of its constant concerns.





In view of this, it is important that it should use all the means at its disposal continually to extend its contacts with the public and get as many different sections of the population as possible to co-operate directly or indirectly in Unesco's work. The vitality and efficiency of the National Commissions are measured by the scale of public participation in the development of international co-operation; and whatever the capacity of the Unesco Secretariat to foster these ideals at the international level, their dissemination and their achievement will inevitably remain limited without the support of the National Commissions.

14. Co-operation with the international non-governmental organizations and their national branches is one of the most effective means of extending the field of action of the National Commissions. They may also set up their own ad hoc committees for the examination or in-depth study of parts of the programme which require specific treatment involving the participation of highly qualified specialists. These committees may have temporary or permanent effects on the composition, organization and representativity of the Commissions.

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15. Whilst the full accomplishment of the tasks of the National Commissions, both at national level and in the field of international co-operation, reflects the authority and efficiency of their secretariats, it also depends on the means and resources at their disposal. The financing of the National Commissions is the responsibility of the Member States, an obligation which they accept on becoming members of the Organization. It is desirable that, taking into account the resources of the Member State, the National Commission should have its own financial resources covering in particular the remuneration of members of staff of its secretariat, if they do not belong to the civil service, travel and hospitality expenses, conferences and meetings, information campaigns and other activities within their competence, as well as contracts which may be concluded with outside collaborators. The National Commissions may receive supplementary financial assistance under the programme and budget of Unesco.





Proposals concerning the Draft Charter by  
Sub-regional Meetings of National Commissions

Central and West Africa, 23-25 August 1977, Ouagadougou, Upper Volta  
(Resolution no. 4)

- Considering that the National Commissions play essential roles of liaison, consultation, information, execution and evaluation;
- Considering also their role, as regards innovation in the various aspects of the programme of the Organization;
- Considering the draft charter of National Commissions presented by the Secretariat in pursuance of resolution 7.41 adopted by the nineteenth General Conference of Unesco;

The meeting of National Commissions of Central and West Africa held in Ouagadougou, 23-25 August 1977, after examination of the draft charter:

- Extends its congratulations to the Secretariat for the work that has been done;
- Notes, however, that this preliminary draft charter does not mention some of the key ideas of the activities of the Organization, the status of Secretaries-General of National Commissions and the means to be provided for their functioning;
- Asserts that the charter of National Commissions must be a structured normative document, containing a preamble, the duties and rights of National Commissions, as well as an annex of case studies; the document would deal particularly with:
  - the various activities which must be entrusted to these Commissions by Member States of the Organization;
  - the status of the staff of National Commissions;
  - the source and adequate means required for the smooth functioning of National Commissions.
- Considers that the draft charter must be prepared by National Commissions themselves;
- Invites, in consequence, the Director-General to entrust the National Commissions with the finalization of the draft charter during a consultation between representatives of the National Commissions of Unesco's five regional groups."





East, Southern African and South Western Indian Ocean, 4-8 October 1977,  
Tananarive, Madagascar (Para. VIII)

"After the exchange of views on the National Commissions, the meeting made the following recommendations:

- 1) that greater emphasis in the charter should be laid on paragraph 15 which should be further expanded;
- 2) that the charter states categorically that National Commissions are entitled to supplementary financial assistance under the Unesco Participation Programme;
- 3) that the Unesco Secretariat itself gives its own point of view as to what should constitute the contents of the charter;
- 4) that the charter reflects the National Commissions' activities at different levels of information and execution of the programme of Unesco;
- 5) that the charter, though not legal document, should be accepted as a document upon which the National Commissions and Unesco's cooperation can be based;
- 6) that Member States and National Commissions respond positively to the Director-General in the elaboration of the charter."

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Comments of the National Commissions on the paragraphs  
in the preliminary draft Charter

Paragraph 1

- Austria - this paragraph is not in conformity with the wording of the Constitution
- Bulgaria - on line 4, after the word "government" add "and public"
- Netherlands - the exact text of Article VII, 1, of the Constitution should be followed
- Poland - no objections

Paragraph 2

- Austria - a much too early position for this content
- Bulgaria - line 3, after "in accordance with" change the word order to "the political, cultural and socio-economic conditions"
- German Democratic Republic - the Commission of the German Democratic Republic supports the principle in para. 2 of the draft that the legal status, structures, etc. of the National Commissions are established by the governments of the Member States. These are the limits which are clearly recognizable in the elaboration of the Charter, i.e. it is the governments of Member States which decide in accordance with the principle of sovereignty on the form of organization at the national level of the activities emanating from their membership in Unesco
- Netherlands - such a text should preferably appear at the end of the Charter
- Poland - no objections
- Seychelles - should read: "The National Commissions are established by the Governments of Member States after discussion of the matter in detail with CPX/NAC, Unesco, as to what should constitute the minimum requirements of the secretariat of a National Commission; although their legal status, ..... etc."

Paragraph 3

- Austria - does not describe the primary function of National Commissions which consists in the execution of Unesco programmes of interest to scientists, educators, artists, etc. and carried out on a national or regional basis





- Belgium - too detailed
- Bulgaria - line 7, after the words "inspire the governments" add "and the public"; line 9, after the words "the establishment of a new" add "equitable"
- Canada - does not meet the objectives of the document, i.e. the second sentence is not in accordance with Article VII
- German Democratic Republic - welcomes that certain principles are mentioned in the preamble which define the tasks of the National Commissions in the framework of development and international cooperation. From this point of view, para. 3 of the present draft should be considerably enlarged
- Italy - too much emphasis on the information function in relation to other functions of National Commissions
- Japan - 2nd sentence: primary functions of National Commissions may vary from country to country, depending on cultural, socio-economic and political conditions. Therefore, the description of primary functions should be in more general terms; if it is not feasible it should be deleted. The relationship between "primary functions" in this sentence and "main functions" in para. 8 is not clear
- Netherlands (paras.3,4) - cannot be accepted in this form. It is questionable whether such texts are needed in a Charter of National Commissions
- Poland - the expression "the Organization's ideals" should be replaced by the objectives of Unesco as expressed in the Constitution. The fact that peace is mentioned as the last objective is not justified.
- Seychelles - after 7th line, insert "of their country" between "peoples" and "of the world"
- United Kingdom - the purpose of National Commissions is laid down clearly in Article VII of the Constitution. Cannot agree to the elaboration of this paragraph
- USSR - Considering the importance of this para. which defines the basic functions of National Commissions, attention is drawn to its lack of precision and its incompleteness in its present form (contributing to the achievement of lasting peace, for example, has been placed last after a number of the Organization's other roles). When this paragraph is redrafted it is essential that the wording of Article I of the Constitution of Unesco ("Purposes and functions") be adhered to; it would in fact be desirable to reproduce the text of paragraph 1 of that Article. In addition, para. 3 of the National Commissions' charter should also reflect, in accordance with the decisions of the General Conference, such vital requirements of contemporary international life as contributing to the resolution of the disarmament problem, the total elimination of colonialism, the establishment of a new international





economic order and the development of equitable and mutually advantageous cultural and scientific cooperation as a factor for consolidating peace, friendship and mutual understanding between peoples

Paragraph 4

- Austria - the concept of the responsibilities of governments should be more precisely defined
- Netherlands - see comment to para. 3
- Poland - "These great ideals" should be replaced by the objectives of Unesco expressed in the Constitution. It is not appropriate to place the responsibilities of governments and the National Commissions at the same level. In addition, the mention of "moral and material" responsibilities is too general

Paragraph 5

- Austria - the role of National Commissions in planning and programming is not mentioned
- Bulgaria - should be redrafted to read "The National Commissions provide the Member States with an effective means of stimulating those countries' interest in the Organization's ideals and programme, which they implement in closest link with Unesco"
- Netherlands - In this para. the National Commissions seem too much as instruments, which Unesco can use for activities in Member States. However, they also serve as bodies in which the wishes of Member States regarding the Organization are formulated. Moreover, as Unesco is composed of its Member States, it is preferable to substitute "Unesco" by "Unesco's Secretariat". The same remark holds true for para 6
- Poland - the same objections to "ideals" as in para. 4

Paragraph 6

- Austria - Same comment as to para. 5
- Netherlands - See para. 5
- Poland - not necessary to repeat the formulation "material and moral responsibilities". The second para. of this para. should be formulated "The National Commissions can play a particularly important role in the measures aimed at obtaining the support of professional and political circles for the international cooperation programme. They should see to it that this programme takes into consideration national interests and needs and that it creates an appropriate basis for international cooperation"



Paragraph 7

- Austria - incomplete, e.g. the relations of National Commissions with NGO's are not mentioned
- Bulgaria - the first sentence should be redrafted to read "In each Member State the establishment of a National Commission is a governmental responsibility, which involves the passing of a decree or law, or any other procedure as would be acceptable to the Member State". The third sentence from "Its incorporation" to "decisions" should be deleted, as the ways of settling this question could vary widely depending on conditions in the different countries, bearing also in mind that the National Commissions should keep their public character, something that could not be guaranteed in the particular case. In the last sentence of this point the words from "The most important factor" to "in this decision is that" should be deleted. The sentence should therefore begin from "The National Commission should be provided ...."
- Ireland - line 2, substitute "which may involve" for "which involves"
- Netherlands - the links which National Commissions should have with the national governmental administration are described in this para. However, no mention is made of the equally important links which National Commissions should have with the non-governmental world. It is not clear what is meant by "interdisciplinary cooperation on the level of competences"
- Poland - add at the end of the second sentence after "with the administration" the words "and with the government bodies responsible for the development of education, science and culture"
- United Kingdom - the method of establishment of a National Commission is solely a matter for the government of each Member State. The second half of the first sentence is thus redundant

Paragraph 8

- Austria - should be placed right at the beginning of the Charter
- German Democratic Republic - as far as the functions are concerned, which are included in para. 8 and the following paras, the Commission of the German Democratic Republic wishes to draw attention once more to the fact as well as the necessity that these functions are dependent on (tributaries to) the internal laws and regulations of the Member States. The Commission of GDR agrees with the tasks defined in the draft. Taking into account the sovereignty of States, all efforts should be made to make this a generally accepted norm
- Japan - the substance of para 3, i.e. that National Commissions are advisory, liaison, executive and information bodies, is agreeable. However, the elucidatory paras that follow hardly give clear-cut ideas concerning individual functions of National Commissions





- Netherlands - the text should be placed at the beginning of the Charter
- Poland - the role of National Commissions in the evaluation of the programme in accordance with resolution 19 C/res. 7.41 b should be added to the functions of the National Commissions
- Seychelles - at the end of the paragraph add "In order to achieve these, Unesco and each government should consider it a duty to ensure that the secretariat of the National Commission has at least two (2) staff members besides the Secretary-General of the Commission; and whereby a yearly budget is made available in order to enable the National Commission to function efficiently"
- Sudan - at the national level, a place has to be found for "evaluation" as an important function of National Commissions, as complementary to advise, coordination, information and execution

#### Paragraph 9

- Austria - an extension of the role of National Commissions to social and economic planning and development is not acceptable; the function of National Commissions in an advisory capacity is not primarily exercised in the preparation of Unesco's programme and budget and of its draft medium term plan, and later during the implementation of activities approved by the General Conference, but is absolutely limited to these tasks
- Denmark - the rôle of National Commissions in social and economic development and planning should be deleted. In many countries this is not within the mandate of the National Commission and it may even be debated whether it comes under the mandate of Unesco
- Finland - social and economic development and planning extends the role and functions of National Commissions beyond their competence and beyond the competence of Unesco within the UN system
- Japan - the expression "This role ..... economic development and planning" is not appropriate because it gives an impression that National Commissions have a role in "social and economic development and planning" independently of education, science, culture and communication
- Netherlands - the second sentence is not acceptable. It is certain that many, if not most National Commissions, do not play a role in the field of social and economic planning
- Poland - the formulations used are correct in principle but instead of underlining the need to expand the activities of Unesco to the field of economic and social development one should rather stress the links of the activities of Unesco with this development. In the last sentence "exercised" should be replaced by "performed"

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Seychelles

- at the end of the paragraph add "Thus the Government's duty and responsibility is to provide the Secretary-General of the National Commissions with as much information as possible regarding the Government's policies in all fields of development"

USSR

- the paragraph deals with the role of the National Commissions in connexion with social and economic development and planning. It is necessary to make it entirely clear that this refers exclusively to matters connected with Member States' collaboration with Unesco in the planning and implementation of Unesco's programme in the fields in question. Participation by National Commissions in the internal planning and activities of Member States in the field of social and economic development is a purely internal matter

#### Paragraph 10

Austria

- it does not seem reasonable to speak of a "duty to be fully informed". It is not acceptable to mention the advisory and liaison capacity of National Commissions in the same paragraph

Bulgaria

- second paragraph should read "at the national level, establish and maintain permanent links with the government bodies concerned, with study and research centres ..... " etc. unchanged to end of paragraph.

In the third paragraph it is unclear how National Commissions can possibly "act along similar lines" in relation to Unesco and to the National Commissions in all other Member States, given that the character of relations with the indicated organs is absolutely different

Canada

- this paragraph and the following are incomplete as they make no reference to the important domestic programme activities undertaken by many National Commissions. On the other hand, they go too far into irrelevant detail (i.e. concerning appointments and committee structure). Some of the ideas are wrong, for example the vitality and efficiency of National Commissions are measured by the amount of useful work they do and not by "the scale of public participation in the development of international cooperation". The stress should be on National Commissions as agencies of national participation and this emphasis is almost lacking.

Ireland

- line 5, substitute "may" for "must"; para. 12, third sentence: omit the words "in addition to members appointed by governments"

Netherlands

- in this paragraph the liaison function of National Commissions is made dependent on their consultation function ("advisory capacity"). This is not in keeping with Article VII, 2, of the Constitution, where these two functions are independent of each other. Also the rest of the paragraph is unclear

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- Poland - the part concerning the role of National Commissions at the international level should be developed, underlining the necessity to enlarge bilateral, regional and international cooperation. The National Commissions are presently becoming a new element of international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and communication
- Seychelles - at the end of the second paragraph add "Governments should realize that it is beyond the Secretary-General's capacity to take the initiative, at the national level, to establish permanent links with various departments of the country if he is alone to run the National Commission, besides performing his normal duties as a civil servant"
- United Kingdom - the final section of the paragraph needs clarification. The United Kingdom National Commission does not consider that National Commissions can be expected to establish permanent links with bodies other than National Commissions in other states, nor to do so with the National Commissions of all other states

#### Paragraph 11

- Austria - non-substantial wording
- Japan - see para. 8
- Netherlands - projects with international implications are not always carried out by National Commissions under contracts concluded with Unesco. The end of the paragraph should be deleted
- Poland - no objections
- USSR - in the third sentence it is considered desirable to insert after the words "exchange of persons" the words "within the framework of Unesco's programme"

#### Paragraph 12

- Austria - on the one hand, the enumeration of members of National Commissions is incomplete, on the other, there is mention of representatives of parliaments and of economic and planning sectors, which is not acceptable to a country like Austria
- Bulgaria - after "representatives of trade unions and the economic and planning sectors" add "individuals who are concerned with questions of international cooperation, so as to be in a position ..." unchanged to the end
- Ecuador - replace "the recruitment of their members" by "the election of their members"
- Netherlands - this paragraph goes too much into detail, e.g. no representatives of the economic and planning sectors form a part of the Netherlands National Commission

- Poland - no comments
- United Kingdom - not happy about the use of the word "representatives", nor about the implication that some members of National Commissions ought to be appointed by non-governmental bodies. Governments may choose either to appoint "representatives" of the various types of organization mentioned or to appoint individuals who happen to belong to such organizations. It must also be left to the discretion of each Government whether it chooses to delegate to some other body the appointment of any members of its National Commission
- Tanzania - deals with the composition of National Commissions and rightly advises on their broad composition. But rather than refer to representation of parliaments it might probably be better to use the term "legislators", which is less restrictive. While all Member States do not have parliaments, all of them have institutions that enact legislation
- Paragraph 13
- Austria - not acceptable as a whole
- Canada - see comment to para. 10
- Ecuador - replace "who are the life-force of the nation" by "who represent the widest sections of the nation"
- Japan - the logical relationships between the first sentence and the second and ensuing sentences are not clear; nor between the fourth and fifth sentences
- Netherlands - it is not clear what is meant by the first sentence. Moreover, it is not correct to measure the vitality and efficiency of National Commissions by the scale of public participation in the development of international cooperation; the important information function of National Commissions is one among several others
- Poland - instead of speaking of "dissemination of ideals" one should speak of the objectives, programmes and activities of Unesco
- Seychelles - at the end of the paragraph add "It is very important, therefore, that the National Commission be well set up from the beginning so as to ensure continuity of its functions. Thus CPK/NAC should send a qualified person to assist the Secretary-General of a National Commission during the early development of the Commission"
- Switzerland - too superficial treatment of National Commissions as information organs. Same comment as Canada and Netherland concerning "the vitality and efficiency of National Commissions"

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- United Kingdom - cannot accept implication in the second sentence that the volume of information disseminated is of equal importance to the quality

Paragraph 14

- Austria - it is an interesting principle to point out the necessary flexibility of National Commissions but it does not seem necessary to stress cooperation with international NGO's
- Bulgaria - in the first sentence delete the words "one of the most" so that the sentence should read "Cooperation ..... is an effective means ....."
- Japan - the logical relationship is not clear between "Cooperation with the international non-governmental organizations and their national branches" and "setting up of National Commissions' own ad hoc committees". The suggestion to set up ad hoc committees comes out abruptly. What is advocated in this paragraph as a whole is not readily understandable
- Netherlands - the way in which the cooperation between international and national non-governmental organizations and National Commissions is treated is not correct, especially in the first sentence of the paragraph

- Poland - no comments

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Paragraph 15

- Austria - the question of the financing of National Commissions should appear earlier in the draft
- Japan - what is the legal basis of saying in the second sentence that "The financing of the National Commissions is the responsibility of Member States, and an obligation which they accept on becoming members of the Organization"? The too detailed reference in the third sentence to objects of expenditure (i.e. "travel and hospitality expenses, conferences and meetings .... collaborators") is not balanced with descriptions in other parts of the preliminary draft
- Netherlands - such a paragraph should be placed more at the beginning of the Charter. It should also mention that National Commissions should be living bodies and not exist only on paper. The need for sufficient staffing should be mentioned
- Poland - no comments
- Seychelles - delete in next to last line "may" and replace by "must"
- Switzerland - enters too much into details of organization
- Tanzania - the paragraph should read "The National Commissions are entitled to financial assistance under the programme and budget of Unesco".

Proposals in the replies of the National Commissions  
concerning the structure of the Charter

The National Commission of Japan

- a) General matters (e.g. nature of document, etc.)
- b) Purposes and functions of National Commissions
- c) Composition/membership of National Commissions
- d) Status and roles of National Commissions at national and international levels
- e) Other matters

The National Commission of New Zealand

- a) Preamble: would include references to Article VII and relevant General Conference resolutions
- b) Suggested structure: this would stress that need for the widest possible representation of interests
- c) Suggested functions: this should specify and elaborate on each of the advisory, liaison, executive and information functions and should emphasise the role of National Commissions in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of Unesco's programme
- d) Staffing, Finance and Authority: the need for adequate permanent staff, financial resources and authority to enable effective and efficient performance of their functions should be included here
- e) Relationship with Unesco: a definitive statement on the potential relationship between a National Commission and Unesco should be included, e.g. although the legal status, structure and methods of cooperation of National Commissions are established by the Governments of Member States, Unesco will, whenever possible, involve National Commissions in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of Unesco's programme. Unesco will support the activities of National Commissions whenever possible by way of supplementary financial assistance under the programme and budget of Unesco

The National Commission of Romania

- a) Preamble: the pertinent principles in the Constitution and in the Declaration on the principles of international cooperation
- b) Definition of the role of National Commissions with stress on the information, communication and consultative functions of the National Commissions vis-à-vis their governments





- c) The National Commissions are national organs which are dependent on the pertinent legislation of the governments in conformity with the principles of national sovereignty and independence
- d) Underlining of the role of National Commissions in the cooperation between national institutions charged with the execution of projects in the fields of Unesco's competence
- e) The growing importance of cooperation between National Commissions. The Charter should refer to principles, forms and techniques of cooperation between the National Commissions themselves, between the National Commissions and regional and sub-regional centres and the NGO's affiliated to Unesco
- f) The increasing role of National Commissions in the elaboration, execution and evaluation of the programme of Unesco
- g) The Charter should refer to the establishment and functioning of the National Commissions as well as to the terms and conditions for the support which Unesco gives to the activities of National Commissions for the execution of projects in the fields of Unesco's competence
- h) The final paragraphs of the Charter should stipulate the manner in which the activities of National Commissions are evaluated and followed

The National Commission of Switzerland

- a) Preamble: Paras. 1-6 of the draft text should be shortened and should refer to Article VII of the Constitution. A charter should refer to principles and not enumerate a series of details of operational nature (cf. para. 3)
- b) Creation and functions of National Commissions as organs of consultation, liaison, execution and information
- c) Activities of National Commissions
- d) Relations of National Commissions with the Secretariat

The National Commission of the United Kingdom

- a) The purpose of a National Commission: very brief as in Article VII of the Constitution
- b) Status and structure: based on paras. 2-7, 12 and 14 of draft but shorter and only concrete facts, not rhetoric
- c) Functions: broken down into four categories as in para. 8, with a single short paragraph for each function
- d) Facilities: reduced version of para. 15
- e) Responsibilities:
  - i) Unesco
  - ii) Member State
  - iii) National Commission



The National Commission of Trinidad and Tobago

The Secretary-General of the Commission has prepared a new draft, the main points of which are the following:

Preamble

- Reference to the preamble of the Constitution of Unesco and references to Article VII of the Constitution
- Reference to the contribution of National Commissions to international cooperation by involving national expertise of Member States in the work of Unesco and to the need of developing them further as well as the cooperation between the Commissions at all levels

Article I - Purposes and Functions

- The purpose of each Commission is to act as a link between Member States so that these can derive increasing benefits from Unesco and so that they contribute to peace and security by helping Unesco in its work
- For this purpose, each Commission shall disseminate information, etc. about the programme of Unesco, encourage participation in the formulation and execution of this programme, advise the Government and act as a liaison agency for the Secretariat of Unesco and the Regional Offices in matters related to Unesco and advise the delegation to the General Conference
- As every Member State is a member of a regional and sub-regional group, each Commission shall contribute to the process of decentralization by collaborating with other Commissions and with Regional Offices and Centres in fostering sub-regional cooperation, e.g. by exchange of visits, promotion of joint projects, exchanges of material, cooperation between universities
- To safeguard the universality of Unesco each Commission should initiate bilateral and interregional contacts with other Commissions
- In order to advise the national delegations and to reduce risk of confrontations at the international level there should be a meeting of Secretaries-General immediately preceding each session of the General Conference

Article II - Obligations of Unesco with respect to National Commissions

- Fostering the development of the Commissions and facilitating the discharge of their functions at the national level by providing advice and services in the establishment or reorganization of any Commission, training for Secretaries-General and other staff, items of essential equipment under the Participation Programme, documentation and information materials, and direct and early information about missions of Unesco officials and consultants
- Encouragement of decentralization and increased effectiveness of the Organization's work through National Commissions by contracts with the Commissions for the execution of projects, financial support for regular

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sub-regional and regional meetings of Commissions and the participation of Unesco officials in the said meetings, endorsing and assisting in the establishment of a sub-regional cooperative relationship

- Encouragement of interregional contacts between the Commissions by the continuation of meetings of small groups of experienced Secretaries-General from all regions for exchanges of views on specific problems, by meetings of Secretaries-General before each General Conference, by Collective Consultations and by supporting the attendance of observers from other regions in regional conferences of Commissions
- Ensurance that 1% of Part II of the programme and budget, exclusive of staff costs, is allocated to cooperation with National Commissions

Article III- Obligations of Member States with respect to National Commissions

- Ensurance that the National Commissions in their composition are broadly representative both of government agencies and other interested national bodies as required by Article VII of the Constitution. Involvement of Organizations and outstanding individuals not directly represented on the Commission by other means. Ensurance of the collaboration between permanent delegations and the National Commissions
- Provision of a permanent secretariat, of financial and policy support, and of a clearly defined legal status for the Commission.

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