THE FIFTH INTERREGIONAL MEETING OF NATCOMS FOR UNESCO
19-21 June 2018
Diani, Republic of Kenya

Report prepared by the Rapporteurs
Ms Zabrina Holmström, Secretary-General of the Finnish National Commission
Ms Rosie Agoi, Secretary-General of the Uganda National Commission
SUMMARY REPORT
Conclusions and recommendations

The Fifth Interregional Meeting of NATCOMs for UNESCO was attended by over 120 participants, representing 95 NATCOMs/Permanent Delegations in fruitful interaction with representatives of UNESCO multisectoral and regional offices.

The final programme of the meeting and the list of participants are to be found under this link.

TUESDAY 19 JUNE 2018 a.m.
PLENARY SESSION

Opening Ceremony of the Meeting
Welcoming remarks:

- **Mr Wenslas Ong’ayo**, MBS, Acting Chair of the Board of the Kenya NATCOM for UNESCO, delivered short opening remarks and welcomed the participants.

- **Mr Nicolas Kassianides**, Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Public Information (ADG/ERI) a.i., thanked the Kenya Government and the NATCOM for hosting the recently concluded Pan-African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE) in Nairobi. He underlined the importance that the Director-General and the Secretariat as a whole attached to cooperation with the NATCOMs - an integral part of the Organization. ADG a.i. reiterated that this cooperation must be strengthened or reviewed together, where necessary, to better meet the challenges and expectations of Member States/Associate Members and their societies. He informed the participants that the Director-General Madam Audrey Azoulay had proposed at the last Executive Board the strategic transformation of UNESCO, and that the Preparatory Group of the Executive Board was meeting in Paris at the very same time as the NATCOMs in Diani. The participants of both meetings should be able to share their views on the strategic transformation. He said that we would be able to meet the many challenges we face only if we were driven by a sense of shared ambition and responsibility between Member States, NATCOMs and the Secretariat, including its field offices.

- **Mr Simon Kachapin**, Chief Administrative Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Kenya as Representative of Amb. (Dr.) Amina C. Mohamed, EGH, CAV, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Kenya and Chairperson of the Kenya NATCOM for UNESCO, officially announced the opening of the meeting. He emphasized that this kind of meeting was very important for enhancing the networking of NATCOMs and promoting the visibility of UNESCO at the international level, hence it should be encouraged to take place continuously.

Election of Chair, Vice Chairs and Rapporteurs

- **Ms Evangeline Njoka** was elected Chair. The Vice-Chairs elected from each region were the following:
  - Arab States Group: **Mr Abdulgadir Muhammad Hassan Nouredden**, Secretary-General, NATCOM of Sudan;
  - Asia Pacific: **Ms Lila Ramos Shahani**, Secretary-General, NATCOM of Philippines;
  - Europe and North America: **Mr Nicolas Mathieu**, Secretary-General, NATCOM of Switzerland;
  - Latin America and the Caribbean: **Mr Oscar Leon Gonzalez**, President, NATCOM of Cuba.

Rapporteurs: **Ms Rosie Agoi**, Secretary-General, NATCOM of Uganda; **Ms Zabrina Holmström**, Secretary-General, NATCOM of Finland.

Objectives of the meeting:

- ADG/ERI a.i. reminded the participants of some of the objectives as mentioned during the opening ceremony, particularly in relation to the strategic transformation, on mobilization of all partners, development of partnerships and on assisting UNESCO to increase its credibility and visibility in its Member States. The Secretariat looks forward to proposals and ideas to emerge from the meeting.
The President stated that the strategic transformation process would not be complete without input of NATCOMs and therefore the 5th Interregional meeting was very timely. The need was felt to rethink UNESCO through the strategic transformation and include the voices of NATCOMs in this process, share best practices and re-engineer the work of NATCOMs.

The contribution of NATCOMs to UNESCO’s Strategic Transformation
(Modalities for engaging NATCOMs in the process in alignment with their respective Member States: Mechanism/Format and Timeframe for consultation)

ADG/ERI a.i. introduced the first item of the meeting related to the strategic transformation of UNESCO, aimed to improve the operational efficiency and the means of action of UNESCO and to strengthen its programmes and priorities. ADG/ERI a.i. emphasized that the key was not to “re-invent the wheel” as the transformation would not start from scratch. The process is outlined in the Executive Board documents 204 EX/31, 204 EX/Decision 31 and 205 EX/5 Part III.D prepared for the meeting of the Preparatory Group of the Executive Board being held simultaneously on 19 June 2018. The process will be built collaboratively with Member States, and will include all UNESCO stakeholders, such as NATCOMs and UNESCO’s public and private partners.

Firstly, the strategic transformation entails **four main objectives:**
- strengthen programmes with a greater focus on priorities,
- reinforce UNESCO’s different roles and functions,
- open up UNESCO,
- enhance efficiency and effectiveness (including the creation of the ADG/ADM post who is expected to be nominated in early autumn 2018 at the latest)

Secondly, the governance of the process is to be secured through:
- a steering committee, chaired by the Deputy Director-General, giving general guidance and providing strategic direction;
- a support unit, with three full-time professional staff, assisting the Steering Committee;
- four working groups on the following themes, to be chaired by ADGs:
  - UNESCO’s communication,
  - UNESCO’s strategic partnerships,
  - UNESCO’s presence in the world, and
  - UNESCO’s operational efficiency.

Thirdly, reflection on the strengthening and strategic adjustments of the programmes to be aligned with the main stages of preparing the next Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and programme and budget document (C/5)
This part calls upon some main actors:
- Member States and their NATCOMs,
- UNESCO staff,
- A group of independent and recognized personalities and advisers in UNESCO’s fields of competence to be called upon by the Director-General to look into emerging trends and challenges.

Discussion
During the subsequent discussion, representatives of **21 NATCOMs** took the floor.

Representatives of NATCOMs welcomed at large the strategic transformation and an inclusive, open dialogue thereon. There is a need for a bold reform to which major challenges need to be included. The moment is right for the process.

Several stated that there was no need for a great new vision in view of the Agenda 2030, which provides a new framework for development cooperation over the next 15 years and the principles of which have been embedded into all UNESCO’s programmes. There was an understanding that only eight weeks had passed
since the spring session of the Executive Board although many steps had been taken in that short time. This is the beginning of the process. Many were pleased to see the clearer commitment to the Agenda 2030 in the follow-up document prepared for the special meeting of the Preparatory Group of the Executive Board (205 EX/5 Part III.D) on 19 June.

Some regrets were expressed on the coincidence of the date of the Interregional NATCOM Meeting in Diani with that of the Preparatory meeting at HQ. One representative reminded participants of 204 EX/Decision 31 and considered that two principles, namely on ethics and accountability, were lacking from the follow-up document. Some others asked about accountability and how the process was being financed. A few remarked that in the process of strategic transformation and in opening up of UNESCO, its intergovernmental nature should be respected. Reference was also made to the importance of following up to the ongoing governance reform and the several recommendations adopted by the General Conference pertaining particularly to the running of the intergovernmental bodies.

Some additional information was sought on the high-level reflection group and whether it would participate in the work of the thematic working groups. The focus should be rather on programmes than on processes, and more information about the ‘strategic component’ is needed. Communication is crucially important in all these aspects.

Some underlined that cooperation between field offices and NATCOMs was important for e.g. the alignment of actions in the interest of Member States. It is also crucial that field offices are fully on board in the process. NATCOMs have an excellent outreach to government, civil society and academia. They are instrumental in mobilizing partnerships, including with youth and the artistic and scientific worlds. The richness of the broad spectrum of the entities of the “UNESCO family” is a power to be used more effectively. There is a need for openness, inclusiveness, mutual confidence and trust.

Some stated that there is also a need to show the diversity of NATCOMs and how they can make a difference. One characteristic is their flexibility. NATCOMs can move forward in informal settings and meetings and collaborate within and between regions in networks. NATCOMs are NATCOMs of Member States and for UNESCO.

One representative stated that the role of NATCOMs as advisors to their Governments and delegations to the General Conference and the Executive Board should be respected. However, determining the Organization’s strategic directions and policies is the primary responsibility of the Executive Board and the General Conference.

**Recommendations concerning the strategic transformation, on the context and how to position and integrate NATCOMs in the process:**

- It is essential that NATCOMs are included in the process of strategic transformation;
- For NATCOMs and their work it is important that UNESCO positions itself strongly in the UN as a full actor in the reform of the UN development system so that there is cooperation and coherence of UNESCO strategic transformation with this reform;
- Strengthening of UNESCO programmes should be the absolute priority in the process of strategic transformation;
- NATCOMs discourage silos. Cross-cutting ideas should be advocated clearly because they are important in and for the strategic transformation;
- NATCOMs should be consulted by the sectoral working groups led by the ADGs, and at annual meetings;
- NATCOMs are better placed than other networks UNESCO works with and should therefore participate in the process of strategic transformation. They provide impact on the ground and are in constant contact with policy makers on national issues;
- For NATCOMs it is important that the strategic transformation process is closely linked to the consultation on the next C/4 – the format of which is to be renewed;
- An inventory on the functions and management of NATCOMs should be put in place to enable sharing of information and knowledge;
- Partnerships within and between regions should be initiated for better communication;
- NATCOMs and the Secretariat should prioritize issues and aim to do things differently;
- NATCOMs should establish a global facilitation group to strengthen exchange and mutual learning, to follow key issues as well as to advocate for clear modalities of work. Some hesitation was raised regarding possible risk of exclusion or marginalization of some NATCOMs;
- An operational website for the exchange of ideas should be established for the NATCOMs;
- The NATCOM Monthly Newsletter could also be used for consultations at large and be developed to serve the purpose of exchanging ideas and contributing to the strategic transformation;
- Capacity of NATCOMs needs to be better comprehended. For better understanding of the role of NATCOMs, training sessions should be developed, not only for HQ staff and interested Permanent Delegations, but also for newcomers in NATCOMs.

**TUESDAY 19 JUNE 2018 p.m.**  
PLENARY SESSION

**Discussing the specificities of NATCOMs’ contribution to UNESCO’s relevance, visibility and outreach: opportunities and challenges**

- **Mr Mohamed Djelid**, the Deputy Director BSP, provided a brief background on the importance of the subject especially regarding UNESCO’s unique position in the UN. He encouraged NATCOMs to share not only their challenges but also achievements. He cited strong and influential NATCOMs like Germany who had made a big contribution to other NATCOMs, especially to African NATCOMs.

**Open discussion**

**21 NATCOMs** took the floor. The discussions ranged from initiatives taken by NATCOMs on programme implementation, partnerships and resource mobilization, South-South cooperation, strategies for future collaboration as well as challenges.

Many NATCOMs shared their experiences on how they had been able to partner in programme implementation as well as capacity building. The German NATCOM shared its experience on the East Africa Collaboration for capacity building of NATCOMs of the Southern Africa. Initiatives like STEP are being initiated in Mexico, Philippines and Kenya. Others are the Geoparks, heritage sites and learning sites for Sustainable development. These initiatives have helped UNESCO increase visibility.

Kenya also shared their experience of partnerships and collaborations, f.ex. with German NATCOM on STEP programme that trains the youth to be job creators. Others were on Geoparks, martial arts, STEM for girls and great support from the regional office in Nairobi.

**Challenges:**
- UNESCO still has visibility issues in Member States;
- Some Member States are riddled with poverty and insecurity, which make UNESCO work very difficult;
- There is poor understanding of NATCOMs in Member States.

**On future perspectives, some NATCOMs proposed the following:**
- NATCOMs should have targeted partnerships at strategic level;
- Social media can be exploited to amplify actions and build capacities;
- NATCOMs should use partnerships to have credibility;
- NATCOMs should use the Category 1 and 2 Centres to raise levels of participation;
- NATCOM’s roles should be aligned and staff should be oriented;
- The need to build synergies with other people for better understanding;
- Use short videos of six minutes to showcase UNESCO;
- Create an online library for publication items produced by NATCOMs;
- Translate UNESCO documents into languages of use;
- Use the launch of the GEM report to create visibility for UNESCO.

**WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE a.m.**

**PLENARY SESSION**

**Engaging NATCOMs, in alignment with their Member States, towards the implementation of Agenda 2030 and of UNESCO’s Programme: challenges and opportunities**

- The session was chaired by Mr Oscar Leon Gonzalez, President of the Cuban NATCOM, in his capacity of Vice-Chair of this meeting, and the item was introduced by Mr Mohamed Djelid, Deputy Director of BSP, by raising the questions such as:
  - How to highlight and improve implementation of SDGs?
  - How to focus, how to work together?

**Background:**

- The next C/5 (2020-2021) and the Medium-Term Strategy C/4 (2022-2029) consultation is soon to start, closely linked to the strategic transformation process.
- Cross-cutting priorities: Youth, Gender, Africa.
- **Structured Financing Dialogue/SFD (11-12 September)** with all donors, partners etc.
- There is a new resource mobilization strategy.
- Reform cannot be done outside the UN system.
- NATCOMs invited to assist UNESCO to position itself.
- National SDG ownership, agencies are there to assist in the implementation of the SDGs, indivisible; nine SDGs relate directly to UNESCO’s mandate.
- The new **integrated budget framework** will change how UNESCO works; all extra-budgetary funds to be aligned with the core C/5 budget leading to increased transparency and more focus on the Programme actually adopted by the GC.
- The **gap** is indicated in the C/5/expected results, house-wide efforts to fund-raising (**Question if there is a detailed list re. funding of gap for NATCOMs to position themselves**).
- UNESCO dependent on 25 top funders: there is a need for more partners, to broaden the base incl. from private sector. NATCOMs have a role to develop partnerships. Invited to assist in fundraising for areas that do not attract funding, such as conventions/normative standard-setting work.
- In terms of communication, UNESCO still has a lot to do, not visible enough – communication also addressed as part of the strategic transformation working group.
- How assist? Voluntary contributions, incl. self-benefitting funds (ex. Brasilia, Peru…): NATCOMs can advocate and push for funding, bring about South-South cooperation, catalyze and assist in mobilizing private and public funding.
- To do that, all need to be on the same page, having the same message.

**UN reform:** (UN Res. on the UN Development System, 31 May 2018):
- New generation of **UN Country Teams**, new generation of **UNDAF**.
- Empowerment of the field level, reform as of 1 Jan 2019: reinvigorate the role of the **Resident Coordination system**; new UNCT Representative with enhanced authority (stronger firewall).
- Look into regional role and presence: if you are not there, you will miss out.
- Dialogue with other specialized agencies and review cooperation with Regional Economic Commissions.
- Doubling of the current **UNDG cost-sharing** arrangement from 1 Jan 2019 (to 9 M USD for UNESCO).
Presentation by representatives of NATCOMs and UNESCO Field Offices: shared experiences from national implementation of Agenda 2030

Mr Gašper Hrastelj, Deputy Secretary-General of the Slovenian NATCOM
- highlighted potential of interregional informal NATCOM Group on Agenda 2030 called together by the United Arab Emirates.
- Slovenia is involved in governmental SDG exercise, works closely with stakeholders in UNESCO’s areas of competence. NATCOM per se not working on outreach or is always not called upon, but NATCOM can involve itself proactively.

Mr Somboun Masouvanh, Secretary-General of the Lao NATCOM
- NATCOMs are different, so is the context. In Laos, there is no field office, few staff, limited budget/capacities.
- Examples: Co-organization of national SDG consultation, activities on Culture of Peace, ESD/climate change and using the ASP network/workshops for principals and teacher.

Mr Rod April, Secretary-General of the Namibia NATCOM
- Cooperation with ROSA, Regional Office for Southern Africa.
- National SDG4 consultation, has brought together focal people to monitor implementation and made use of launching of the GEM report, the World’s Largest Lesson etc.

Challenges:
- improving coordination;
- engaging network of actors;
- building capacities of NATCOM;
- resource mobilization.

Opportunities:
- willingness of stakeholders to collaborate;
- looks into self-benefitting funds, believes in joint planning.

Mr Iftikhar Ahmed Babar, Secretary-General of the Pakistan NATCOM
- Inclusive approach should be adopted, all need to be on the same page.
- NATCOM was instrumental in the Inter-Provincial Education Ministers’ Conference, outcome: Education Policy 2018, TVET Policy 2018.
- Among core priorities - advocacy of girls rights to education with 10 MUSD contribution through the Malala Fund (in Malala schools) as well as engagement of youth through the ASP network.

Ms Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, Director, Nairobi Office
- From the premise of UNESCO’s intergovernmental mandate: how are we leveraging the intellectual mandate? What can we do differently regarding established functions: Laboratory of ideas, standard-setting, capacity-building and international collaboration and partnerships?
- Re. country level programming: no longer running of programmes/projects, NATCOMs should get stronger in influencing governments to be part of UNDAF.
- Positioning of UNESCO takes global strategic thinking. UNESCO should be a thought leader, rise to a higher level, NATCOMs can be part of that, guide through thinking, are we ready?
- UNESCO should no longer run small-scale projects at NGO level, but move away from tiny projects, be brave enough, see the big picture and influence minds and policies!
- We are correct about priorities, but do we do the right things?
- How to ensure capacities of institutes, bring greater focus and advocacy?
- Respond to challenges differently, recalibrate PP projects, be part of a broader analysis.
- Detach NATCOMs from only one ministry.
- Insert transformational change in our thinking along the 5 P’s: People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnerships and Peace.

Ms Lidia Arthur Brito, Director, Montevideo Office
- NATCOMs are best allies.
- Montevideo reports on the 5 P’s to highlight interaction and interconnectivity.
- Wealth of networks, host country is a strong partner. Strong cooperation with NATCOMs in the region, such as Paraguay, Peru, Bahamas, Cuba.
- Examples: Open Science Forum on SDGs, intersectoral MOST School, regional MAB-PP project, celebration of UDHR 70 years, safeguarding of press freedom and safety of journalists.

Mr Shahbaz Khan, Director, Jakarta Office

- NATCOMs are unique.
- Re. self-benefitting model, NATCOMs can help in mobilization.
- Examples: Freedom of expression/WPFD 2017 in Jakarta, World Culture Forum (next in Sumatra, Sept.), training of journalists in climate change reporting.
- Emphasis on South-South cooperation, where Malaysia reaches out to 70 countries.

Open discussion: NATCOMs’ role and potential opportunities re. Implementation of Agenda 2030 and of UNESCO’s Programme

- NATCOM relations with (and within) governments are instrumental in support of SDGs, to get attention of leadership at highest political level.
- Capitalize on the comparative advantage of NATCOMs.
- Assist in formulation of government positions for intergovernmental bodies etc.
- Advocate for civil society, reach out to civil society, and build bridges at large.
- Raise awareness through campaigns.
- Mobilize and motivate networks, partners.
- Assist in fundraising, important to be result-orientated -> better possibilities to fundraise.
- Capitalize and be strategic about UN International Days beyond the actual Days for outreach and visibility, use the days etc. better in strategic communication.
- Look into the potential of using UNESCO designations (WH, MAB, Geoparks, ICH, MoW etc.) to contribute to SDGs.
- Disseminate information, utilize launching of Global Reports to national audiences etc.
- Use the convening power, be a facilitator, platform, gather strategic partners.
- Regional, interregional cooperation among NATCOMs emphasized.
- Share and exchange information, build capacities.
- Look into different strategies for MICs, LICs etc.
- Act in cooperation/liaison with regional offices.
- Engage and sensitize focal groups, incl. youth.
- Attach more importance to capacity building of NATCOMs.
- In many instances still helpful to clarify the role of respective NATCOMs.
- Ensure that NATCOMs have the right tools.
- Improve coordination and results-oriented management, focus on core competencies, and increase coherence.
- Request for training module(s), guidelines for advocacy and awareness raising.
- Provision of social media. Awareness erratic, no use to speak to ourselves, but reach out.
- Need for NEW modalities of communication and material development.
- UNESCO, Member States and their NATCOMs are all accountable for achieving the SDGs, avoid parallel efforts.

WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE p.m.
PARALLEL THEMATIC SESSIONS

The contribution of NATCOMs, in alignment with their respective Member States, to advancing Agenda 2030 in the context of UNESCO’s priorities

Conclusions and recommendations by the thematic groups on the following four themes:

1. Global Priority Africa

Co-chairs: Mr Sanmalmin Aristide Dabire, Secretary-General of the Burkina Faso NATCOM, Mr Lutz Möller, Deputy Secretary-General of the German NATCOM and Mr Yao Ydo, Director, UNESCO Abuja Office
Conclusions and recommendations
- The Secretariat should strengthen the capacities of NATCOMs to better communicate the three strategic documents (Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, and UNESCO's Global Priority Africa) and their interactions towards stakeholders and the general public.
- The African NATCOMs should create sub-regional networks of exchange of experience and information sharing; and the Field Offices should involve these networks in their biennial planning.
- The African NATCOMs should ensure that Global Priority Africa and their flagship and activities are included in their respective national planning system.
- The African NATCOMs should promote the General History of Africa, especially in education.

2. Global Priority Gender Equality
Co-chaired by Ms Allison Flax-Archer, Secretary-General of the British Virgin Islands NATCOM and Ms Katherine Muller-Marin, Director, UNESCO Havana Office

Background
- It was reminded that there were three key documents, agreed by all Member States, which define UNESCO’s approach – 37 C/4 2014-2021 Medium-Term Strategy, 37 C4-C5 – Compl. 1, 39 C/5 Approved Programme and Budget. NATCOMs should be familiar with these documents.
- In UNESCO policy, “gender equality” applies equally to men and women.

Challenges and recommendations
Lively discussion crystalized around five challenges, some more applicable to NATCOMs from LIC, MIC or HIC countries:

1. Stereotyping of women and girls
For example, through images in school textbooks or TV commercials where women are in domestic roles, and men in professional/exciting environments.
Recommendations:
- UNESCO (with support from NATCOM/Member States) should advocate for the use of more balanced images with education authorities, advertising regulators etc.;
- At local level, UNESCO and NATCOMs should always ensure that their own literature presents appropriately balanced images.

2. Empowerment of women in very challenging environments
Colleagues from Guyana and Ecuador highlighted examples such as domestic violence, teenage pregnancies resulting in the exclusion of girls from education, and post-disaster (earthquake) situations where many children had been orphaned while women and girls were helped to make and sell artefacts to raise money for the education of cousins, nephews and nieces etc. in their care.
Recommendation:
- These are hugely challenging issues. The whole UNESCO family needs to act together to identify problems (and if possible solutions) and advocate for governments to address them.

3. Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
a. At the research level, many women drop out of postdoctoral research because it requires extraordinary dedication to work just when women are facing the decision whether or not to have a family. The L’Oreal UNESCO for Women in Science Fellowships are designed to address this problem, and many NATCOMs support that scheme. Nevertheless, simple improvements could be made.
Recommendation:
- NATCOMs should follow up previous winners, publicize their successes, use them as role models (see below) and encourage their universities to feature them in publicity material.
b. At school/university entrance level, many girls are discouraged from studying STEM subjects, especially physics, which is a facilitating subject for engineering careers. A Kenyan colleague described a project to encourage girls through training teachers and introducing female role models in schools. Recommendation:  
- Advocate for similar initiatives to encourage more girls to choose STEM options.

4. Choice of “experts” by media, conference organizers etc.
Statistics show that a very high proportion of expert commentators selected by media companies and conference organizers are male, even when female experts are available. Recommendations:  
- Advocate for companies to use a balanced mix of experts;  
- At a local level, ensure that all UNESCO/NATCOM meetings get the balance of expert speakers right.

5. Information availability
UNESCO should never assume that NATCOMs (or Member State officials) are necessarily familiar with all the key documents – people come and go as staff and volunteers, and do not always have a corporate memory. More regular updates on the key policy documents and related information would be helpful. Recommendations:  
- UNESCO should regularly remind stakeholders of the contents of key policy documents on gender equality.  
- NATCOMs/Member States should collect data on progress to be collated by UNESCO, so that a holistic picture can be provided.  
- UNESCO should produce a roadmap showing how current initiatives are expected to progress towards SDGs.

3. NATCOMs’ work towards added value for youth and their broader and more efficient involvement into UNESCO-related activities  
Co-chaired by Mr. Sébastien Goupil, Secretary-General of the Canadian NATCOM and Mr. Hamed Al Hammami, Director, UNESCO Beirut Office

Conclusions and recommendations
- Engage youth in policy-making processes on a national level, in a meaningful and purposeful way. NATCOMs should advocate for stronger position of youth in this process, through creating new and innovative partnerships.  
- Create/update Guide on youth engagement to be used by NATCOMs through cooperative process that would engage UNESCO Secretariat, NATCOMs and youth representatives.  
- Redefine UNESCO communication strategy so that the formal documents are more ‘youth-friendly’ and understandable for youth.  
- When faced with challenges on participation of youth representatives at UNESCO forums and meetings (ex. visa issues), NATCOMs should take a leading role in advocating for youth and lobbying with Member States and UNESCO Secretariat in order to facilitate youth representatives’ participation at the said meetings. Should the participation be impossible, NATCOMs should find alternative ways to make sure the voice of youth is heard.  
- Use UNESCO/NATCOM patronage as a means of increasing the visibility of youth and amplifying their voice in UNESCO forums.  
- Incorporate principles of youth representation and gender equality as basic principles in the NATCOM charters.  
- Questionnaires/invitations/calls for applications etc. should always include youth. No UNESCO meeting dealing with the issue of youth should be held without youth being represented and consulted.

4. Partnerships, UNESCO Networks (ASPnet, UNESCO Chairs and Clubs, Category 2 centers...), UNESCO Designations (WH sites, BRs, Geoparks, ...)
Mobilizing UNESCO’s Wealth

UNESCO’s Wealth: The UNESCO Extended Family
- 201 NATCOMs for UNESCO;
- 26 subsidiary bodies (category I Institutes, intergovernmental science programs, International Conventions etc.);
- 1073 World Heritage sites: 832 cultural, 206 natural, and 35 mixed properties, in 167 states parties;
- 669 biosphere reserves in 120 countries, including 20 transboundary sites;
- 80 Category II Institutes, 854 Chairs/UNITWIN in 134 countries, over 10,000 Associated Schools in 181 countries;
- 251 UNEVOC Centres in 162 member states;
- SC IGPs - IHP, MAB network.

Key questions to structure the discussion
- Do we have examples of best practice?
- What weaknesses and strengths of working with partnerships and networks?
- How to make better use of these partnerships and networks? Role of UNESCO? Role of NATCOMs?
- How to manage these partnerships better (Quality Control, processes, pro-active engagement)?

SMART Points
- Better and systematic quality control system of UNESCO brand essential. Propose at next EXB.
- There can be a lack of proper business planning – information and training is necessary and economic. Management processes, systems and structures could make the difference.
- Great value in connecting designations in a nation state, recommendation for each country to hold an annual event to bring together all their national designations.
- Lack of incentives to put designations and partnerships into action – evaluate what these incentives might be – ask NATCOMs, designations and UNESCO partnerships section.
- There is a lack of clear and simple accreditation guidelines for UNESCO designations - designations to be held accountable and those that are no longer viable to be removed.
- UN – essential to understand overall UN goals and priorities in order to leverage UNESCO’s influence as a thought leave.
- Sticking to UN/UNESCO values is essential and common assessment frameworks to be produced to maintain the UNESCO brand (for example ethical frameworks for partnerships with corporates).

Individual Recommendations
- Communications between all levels of designations, NATCOMs, Field Offices and UNESCO in Paris to be improved, for example by developing an interactive website with a comprehensive world map showing all the designations and therefore the “Wealth of UNESCO”. Consider finding an appropriate party to propose at the next EXB.
- Quality control: For example, a common assessment frameworks – including for corporate partners in line with UNESCO values. Only way to ensure quality in all Member States. An appropriate party to consider proposing at the next EXB.
- As a principle, UNESCO must ensure it is transparent, consistent and accountable in all it does. Ensure UN accountability frameworks implemented at UNESCO.
- Professional management frameworks are needed at all levels of UNESCO.
- To achieve the above may require a special fund.
- Development of special project to capture these and other recommendations as part of Strategic Transformation. An appropriate party to consider proposing at the next EXB.
THURSDAY 21 JUNE 2018 a.m.
Parallel workshops on modalities for regional and interregional interaction between NATCOMs, and cooperation between NATCOMs and Field Offices
[Each workshop chaired by the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the meeting]

PLENARY SESSION

Recommendations and conclusions from the parallel workshops presented by the Group Rapporteurs as follows at the plenary session:

1. Africa Group
Considering the Strategic Transformation being initiated by UNESCO,
Considering the need for the continued presence of UNESCO at national level to act as an interface between UNESCO, Member States and NATCOMs, to enable more visibility and efficiency,
the Africa Region recommends the following:
- More regional participation programme requests as a means of interfacing at regional level;
- Staff exchange programs between NATCOMs for capacity-building;
- Appointment of focal persons or liaison officers at country-level for all NATCOMs;
- Formation of networks/platforms for cooperation among NATCOMs;
- Stronger cooperation between Field Offices and NATCOMs, including prior consultation between field offices and NATCOMs on Participation Programme before submission;
- An overhaul of the Participation Programme processes and department to ensure: ease of submission and flexibility of the PP platform, and adequate staffing.

2. Arab States Group
Arab NATCOMs emphasised the importance of the alignment of the work of UNESCO in the region with the national development agenda and its priorities to be implemented with the support of UNESCO field offices.

They highlighted the need to clarify the details of the process of Strategic transformation, its ultimate goals and its modalities, while stressing the importance of harmonizing the process and its anticipated outcomes with regional and national priorities.

The Arab NATCOMs recommended the following:
- To distinguish between the roles, and competences of the regional offices and NATCOMs. In this regard, they reiterated the Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and NATCOMs. They also stressed the importance of the complementarity of the roles of UNESCO, field offices and NATCOMs.
- To establish an inclusive coordination mechanism that comprises: an electronic platform for interaction and exchange of information between Arab NATCOMs and to be hosted by the Cairo Regional Bureau, as well as regular preparatory meetings between NATCOMs and offices (the Lebanon NATCOM offered to host the first preparatory meeting in Beirut);
- To enhance the ongoing role of regional and country offices regarding the challenges faced by Palestine in the fields of education, water, culture and other UNESCO fields of action;
- To reactivate and expand the cooperation between Arab NATCOMs regarding UNESCO extended families (UNESCO Chairs, category II centres) and in the framework of current and future regional projects;
- To align NATCOMs cooperation mechanisms with existing regional structures, including LAS/ALECSO and ISESCO;
- To enhance the national and regional visibility of NATCOMs through organizing local and regional workshops and meetings open to public.

3. Asia and Pacific Group
Introductory remarks: It was generally felt that there was an ambiguity to UNESCO’s Strategic Transformation (ST). The documents provided by Headquarters were often vague and general, full of motherhood statements
that were not always concrete. It was therefore questioned whether the process was in fact strategic or even transformative. The agenda was seen as being too wide and the conclusions of the discussion – and the goals of the entire process – essentially unclear. It was felt that ST was headquarters-driven and top-down. Was UNESCO HQ becoming detached from the field? Will there be an actual action plan, especially for the NATCOMs seeking guidance? How exactly will the budget be spent, given our obvious financial constraints?

A SWOT analysis might have allowed the process to be more substantive and clear-cut. Given the heterogeneity of the Asia-Pacific as a whole, and the cultural/linguistic/religious differences across the region, the responses were very varied.

**Recommendations:**
- It is observed that many NATCOMs are struggling, given the respective conditions in which they now find themselves. To begin with, some fall under the Ministry of Culture in their respective countries, while others fall under the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The breadth of UNESCO’s mandate often means that the mother agencies of many NATCOMs do not necessarily understand or appreciate the work being done on the ground. Many deal with financial, structural and human power constraints. The disparity across the region is glaring, with some states receiving full support from their governments, while others receive very little. The AsPac NATCOMs felt that UNESCO should give Member States minimum requirements for each NATCOM to standardize how they might all function properly and according to UNESCO’s goals and thrusts.
- Capacity building was seen as critical, and HQ was encouraged to send experts to train NATCOM staff in the field. A think tank for each region was highly encouraged.
- Inter-sectoral collaboration among sub-regions and between NATCOMs is also vital.
- Mentoring among nation states in the region should not only be from developed countries to developing ones. Rather, the learning process should be a two-way street.
- Small Island Developing States should not be forgotten in these discussions.
- Rather than the many challenges facing AsPac NATCOMs, it was also felt that we should capitalize on the global brand of UNESCO to strengthen our constituencies on the ground. Here mobilizing artists and social media are the key.
- AsPac -- from the NATCOMs to the field offices -- would like to be collectively focused on a united UNESCO.

### 4. Europe and North America Group

**Brief introduction by the chair and key points for discussion:**
- Modalities of NATCOM participation in the process of strategic transformation;
- Consultation on C4 and C5 and different modalities for consultation;
- UNESCO and NATCOMs visibility, outreach and relevance;
- Informal interregional NATCOM group;
- The expectations and opinions about fundraising role of NATCOMs.

**Recommendations / conclusions:**
- **Strategic transformation.** It is important to keep an open dialogue, ensure space for consultations and exchange on strategic transformation. NATCOMs are not to be the members of working groups, but to be included and provide input to the process in another format (e.g. submitting papers, questionnaires). NATCOMs should take a proactive role.
- **Consultation on C4 and C5.** NATCOMs contribution to setting the priorities of UNESCO is essential, the consultation process with NATCOMs should be better organized and iterative, it is important to facilitate youths input. The focus should be on C4.
- **Visibility.** UNESCO visibility is a lot about meaningful communication and communication tools. Strategic communication and timing is essential. One simple example of communication could be playing videos at all UNESCO designations that explain the mission of UNESCO and how the designations are related to this mission.
- **Informal interregional NATCOM network.** Informal interregional NATCOM network could be of benefit to continuing dialogue and consultation. The idea is to have platform for facilitating working group, sharing experiences, following up on recommendations, etc. However, it must not speak on behalf of all NATCOMs.

- **Fundraising.** NATCOMs role has already been defined. NATCOMs role is complex enough and should not be seen as a fundraiser for the HQ. NATCOMs usually do not have capacity for fundraising.

5. Latin America and the Caribbean Group

A broad and interesting meeting on the following topics:

- **Quality control:** documents or sessions are mostly in Spanish in the region, which gives management challenges to those English-speaking Caribbean countries;

- **Structure:** to consider in the future a change of the structure, responsibilities and interface with NATCOMs at the LAC region. Example brought forward of the Africa structure. Strategy for cluster is multi sectorial one- for Member States to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

- **Relationship between NATCOMs and the field offices:** in this context it was proposed to set up a network of Regional NATCOMs for Latin America and the Caribbean.

- **Disbursement of funding for programs in the Cluster Office to receive more clarity on this from HQ. This is however not the case for the Participation Programme.** Recognition was made of this that the PP is well distributed within the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

- **Define better the activities in the region, same for science (natural, social and human).**

- **Language material:** improvement of use of bilingual (Spanish and English) approach for all activities as part of the activities in the region by UNESCO. The languages of Dutch Caribbean and Portuguese also.

- **The GDP should not be the only criteria to be considered in order to distribute funding from Headquarters to the field offices.** Many countries in the Caribbean SIDS and are vulnerable to natural disasters.

**Closing of the Meeting**

The Meeting was closed by ADG/ERI a.i., Ms Evangeline Njoka, Secretary-General of the Kenya NATCOM and Mr Wenslas Ong’ayo, Acting Chair of the Board of the Kenya NATCOM.

**ADG/ERI a.i.** expressed warm thanks to the Kenya NATCOM and government for their hospitality, and thanked all participants for arriving in Diani from all over the world. Pointing back to the main theme on the strategic transformation, he stressed that the dialogue with NATCOMs on how to better integrate NATCOMs in the process and how to build the next Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) should be continued. Regarding the structures, it was noted that ERI would soon be replaced by another structure and ways would be found to show and recognize the importance of NATCOMs. A SWOT analysis is to be done on NATCOMs as well. Their picture is complex with different situations, history etc., but it is important to recognize the added value of NATCOMs. The Secretariat will look into development of the Monthly Newsletter, step up information and make sure that NATCOMs are fully informed about the big issues, such as the revival of Mosul and Artificial Intelligence (AI). In addition to information, training opportunities will be looked into, particularly for new NATCOM staff members. **ADG/ERI a.i.** emphasized the crucial importance of Nat Coms’ cooperation with field offices and urged all the delegates to continue in the same spirit of deep commitment to UNESCO.

**The President** thanked all for honoring the invitation and expressed the hope that NATCOMs would continue networking and parachuting UNESCO to greater heights. The recommendations indicate that NATCOMs have to work more together.

**Mr Ong’ayo,** Acting Chair of the Board of the Kenya NATCOM for UNESCO, thanked the participants on behalf of the Government of Kenya and the NATCOM.

*Karibuni tena / Welcome again!*