Promoting efficient interaction
Consultation Meeting of the UNESCO National Commissions in South Asia
28-30 August, New Delhi, India
Needs for revisiting the collaboration

• 2009 - The last meeting between UNESCO New Delhi Office and the UNESCO National Commissions in South Asia.

• Shift from MDGs to SDGs: more participatory approach and collective efforts to reach by 2030

• The challenging financial situation – calling for more collaboration/synergies between UNESCO Secretariat and NATCOMs and with other UNESCO stakeholders

• New UNSDFs in all New Delhi Cluster Countries emerging

• New UNESCO Country Programming Documents developed

• Exchange of ideas before the General Conference

We will discuss better interface and collaboration btw Secretariat (especially FOs) and NCs in South Asia and agree on NDL Statement
The roles of National Commissions

• Since UNESCO was founded, its mandates and functions have evolved and expanded over the years.

• They have changed significantly both in the Organization’s legal texts and in practice.

• The 2011 IOS evaluation found out that there was a lack of clarity regarding the roles of National Commissions and this affects their cooperation with the Secretariat.
NC’s roles and responsibilities: Historical Background

- UNESCO Constitutions: (1) Advising role, (2) Liaising btw Govts and Secretariat
- 1978 Charter for NCs: (3) Information dissemination, (4) Participation in C/5 planning, execution and evaluation
- EXB and GC resolutions until 2011: (5) establishment of partnership at national level
- 2011 IOS review of Secretariat’s cooperation with NatComs
- 2012: Tripartite working group (Permanent Delegations, NatComs, Secretariat) prepares draft Action Plan
- 2013: The Action Plan was adopted in the 37th GC
- 2015: Progress report of the implementation of the Action Plan was reported and Guideline for Interface and Cooperation btw UNESCO FOs and NCs adopted in the 196th EXB
Objectives

• To strengthen collaboration btw UNESCO Field Offices and Natcoms in New Delhi cluster countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka). The collaboration will include UNESCO Cat I institute, Cat 2 centres, ASPnet, UNESCO Chairs, clubs and associations in respective countries.

• To discuss how the Natcoms and Field Offices can effectively and collectively plan and implement 39C/5 activities in each country in line with national plans and priorities and SDGs.
Challenges identified

1. Ad-hoc and occasional communication between NatComs and UNESCO offices.
2. Inappropriate coordination and networking among NatComs
3. Little sharing of experiences and good practices
4. Insufficient capacity of NatCom officials in UNESCO’s areas of interest.
5. NatCom’s low technical capacity on SDGs and their indicators
Areas of collaboration

Identified during Joint SWOT Analysis & a session related to Effective coordination, communication and knowledge management mechanisms
Communication

• Organization of regular consultation meeting of NatComs on a rotational basis

• Organization of regular Skype meetings between UNESCO FOs and NatComs

• Support to knowledge sharing and collaboration among NatComs.

• Development of a knowledge sharing platform about UNESCO activities

• Strengthening of communication channels through UNESCO focal points
Capacity Development

• Development of training modules/videos for Capacity development of NatComs

• Development of knowledge and technical capacities of NatComs in UNESCO field of competencies and SDGs.

• Support to the development of “Minimum Standards” for NatComs
Joint Fund Raising and Programme implementation

• Explore Joint Fund raising opportunities

• Enhance links between NatComs and UN system to improve understanding of the UN about government priorities in UNESCO areas of competence

• Explore ways of NatComs playing an advocacy role for UNESCO through National Planning Commissions
New Delhi Statement
Call upon the Member States to provide their National Commissions (NATCOMs) with sufficient human and financial resources as well as statutory means required for fulfilling their missions.

Support NATCOMs with a legal set-up for enhancing partnerships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the private sector and mobilising financial resources from new funding sources.

Enhance collaboration with NATCOMs for endorsing and implementing regular and extra-budgetary programmes and fund-raising activities in the areas of UNESCO’s fields of competence aligned with the SDGs.

Develop “minimum” standards of function of NATCOMs in consultation with UNESCO Field Offices and NATCOMs in South Asia.
RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

- Set up a channel of communication with UNESCO Offices and among NATCOMs through a designated focal person in each country.
- Identify and fully utilise the existing resources of UNESCO partners such as Category I Institutes and Category II centres, UNESCO Charis, ASPnet, and UNESCO Clubs and Associations to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.
- Enhance information sharing among NATCOMs in South Asia.
- Encourage the Member States to endorse the SAARC Framework for Action: Education 2030 (SFA) and support its implementation.
- Seek joint fund-raising opportunities with Field Offices towards potential donors in New Delhi Cluster Countries.
RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNESCO SECRETARIAT

- Develop web-based platforms to strengthen communication among NATCOMs, UNESCO field offices in South Asia and UNESCO Bangkok and the UNESCO headquarters. (Partially complete)
- Organise periodic communication with NATCOMs through such means as Skype and tele conferencing.
- Organise biennial NATCOM meetings starting from 2019, preferably on a rotational basis in the countries in South Asia.
- Encourage and support capacity development of NATCOMs to enhance their knowledge in all UNESCO programme areas.
- Take note of the need for collaboration with NATCOMs in seeking endorsements of extra-budgetary activities by Member States.
- Develop and share fund-raising strategies with NATCOMs.
➢ Enhance communication channels between NATCOMs and the UNESCO New Delhi Office through the designated focal points for each country.

➢ Encourage collaboration among NATCOMs and UNESCO Institutes/centres and Chairs in South Asia.

➢ Support collaboration efforts between NATCOMs and the UN system in countries where UNESCO is a non-resident Agency.
Country specific immediate follow up actions
Bangladesh
• Development of a master plan for ICT in Education

Bhutan
• Comprehensive review of school curriculum for Classes 4 to 10
• Support to strengthen EMIS.
• Technical Assistance to Bhutan Five-Year Plan (Education).
Nepal

• Support to development of a quality curricula of international standards.

• Support to enhance quality and access to Secondary School Education

• More engagement in the media.

• Explore ways of enhancing collaboration with NatComs in sectors other than ED

• Explore the application of Art for Peace Education
Maldives
• Development of ICT capacities of teachers
• Development of a master plan for the digitization of education.

Sri Lanka
• Technical Support to enhance EMIS encompassing education in general, and higher education and skills development in particular.