



International Cooperation



UNESCO

India is among the founding members of UNESCO, a constituent body of the United Nations, which came into existence in 1946. Building the “Defences of Peace in the Minds of Men” is the primary goal of UNESCO, for which education is its main tool. India has been playing an active role in promoting UNESCO’s ideals and objectives.

UNESCO Division in the Ministry coordinates India’s interface with UNESCO and in addition looks after administrative matters concerning Auroville Foundation, an autonomous organisation set up under the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988.

Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

For associating its principal bodies interested in educational, scientific and cultural matters with the work of UNESCO, the Government of India had set up the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (INCCU) in 1949. The Commission consists of five Sub-Commissions in the fields of Education, Culture, Communication, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. The Minister of Human Resource Development is the President of the Commission, Secretary (S&HE) is its ex-officio Secretary General and Joint Secretary in charge of the UNESCO Division is the ex-officio Deputy Secretary General of the Commission. The Deputy Secretary / Director (UNESCO) functions as Secretary of the Commission. The total membership of the Commission is 100 with 50 individual and 50 institutional members distributed evenly among its five Sub-Commissions. The membership is for a period of 4 years. The main function of the Commission is to advise the Government on all matters concerning UNESCO. The Commission has been playing an important role in UNESCO’s work particularly in the formulation and execution of its programmes in collaboration with UNESCO Secretariat as well as the National Commissions of the Asia and the Pacific Region.

The Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO has been reconstituted recently.

Activities of the Commission

Participation Programme of UNESCO: Under its participation programme, UNESCO provides limited financial assistance to various institutions of Member States for undertaking such innovative projects as would contribute at the national, sub-regional and inter-regional levels to the implementation of the objectives of UNESCO. However, from the biennium 2006-07, India has decided not to apply for assistance from UNESCO under this programme.

UNESCO Coupons Programme: The Commission continues to operate the UNESCO International Coupons Programme designed to assist individuals and institutions working in the field of educational publications, scientific equipment, educational films, etc., from abroad without undergoing the foreign exchange and import control formalities. Presently the programme is being reformulated by the UNESCO.

UNESCO Craft Prize awarded to an Indian: Shri Mantu Chandra Das, Master Crafts Person from Guwahati has been co-awarded the Third Prize of US\$ 2000 along with Ms. Galina Turdyeva and Ms Erkebu Jumagulova of Kyrgyzstan, under the UNESCO Craft Prize-2005 for the Asia Pacific Region. This award has been given by UNESCO to Shri Das for an outstanding contribution to creativity in Bamboo and Cane Weaving.

Scheme of Financial Assistance to Voluntary Organisation, UNESCO Clubs and Associated Schools

UNESCO Associates itself with various local and international non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to promote its objectives. The Indian National Commission operates a scheme of financial assistance to voluntary organisations, UNESCO Clubs and Associated Schools for undertaking activities in consonance with UNESCO objectives. There was a budget provision of Rs. 3.00 lakh. As less number of qualified applications were received from NGOs, an expenditure of Rs. 1.00 lakh has been incurred so far during the year 2005-2006.



One Utilisation Certificate is pending in respect of a financial assistance of Rs. 0.25 lakh provided to Poverty Elimination Rehabilitation and Liberation Society, Peresendra, Chickballa pur Tq, Kolar district, Karnataka. Despite of our repeated reminder to grantee Institution and State Government, no reply has so far been received in this regard.

Participation in Seminars, Working Group Meeting Sponsored by UNESCO/its Regional Office

From January, 2005 to December, 2005, INCCU nominated 11 Officers of the Department of Secondary and Higher Education and Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development and 4 experts from other Organisations/ State Governments/NGOs, etc., to participate in various regional and international workshops/training courses/Seminars/Working Group Meetings sponsored by UNESCO and its Regional Offices.

Education for International Understanding

UNESCO is running a project named Associated School Project (ASP net). Associated Schools are educational institutions, which are directly linked with UNESCO Secretariat for participation in the Associated Schools Project (ASP net) for undertaking activities relating to education for international understanding, cooperation and peace. On the recommendation of INCCU, 42 schools and Teacher Training Institutions from India have been enlisted with UNESCO under this project. There are 252 Clubs and 264 Associated Schools registered with INCCU. In the year 2005 a national seminar of ASP net Schools was organised in New Delhi on 20-21 April, 2005 to spread the ideals and objectives of ASP net work of UNESCO.

Scheme for Holding of Meetings of Committees/Conferences and organisation of Exhibitions in furtherance of UNESCO's aims and objectives

This Scheme is meant for meeting the expenditure on TA/DA of non Official members for attending the meeting of the Sub-Commissions of the Indian National Commission and its full body, organisation of exhibitions, INCCU lecture series and other meetings,



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in furtherance of UNESCO's aims and objectives. There was a budget provision of Rs. 15 lakhs at BE and Rs. 15.00 lakhs at RE for this scheme during the current financial year. Under this head an expenditure of Rs. 11.68 lakhs has been incurred so far.

Participation in General Conference of UNESCO

The General Conference of UNESCO is held every alternate year to approve inter-alia, UNESCO's Programme and Budget for the next biennium. India sends a high-powered delegation to the General Conference.

33rd Session of the General Conference

The 33rd session of the UNESCO's General Conference was held in Paris from 3-21 October, 2005. The session marked the 60th Anniversary of UNESCO. The General Conference adopted three new normative instruments – the Convention on protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the International Convention Against Doping in Sports and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. It included two Ministerial Round Tables – on



Education for All (EFA) and another on Basic Sciences. India played a leadership role and participated substantially in all aspects of the Conference. The Indian delegation was led by HRM

For the first time in 60 years, the Indian Ambassador to UNESCO was elected to chair Commission I of the General Conference.

Participation in UNESCO's Executive Board Meetings

India has the unique privilege of having been continuously elected as Member of Executive Board of UNESCO ever since its establishment in 1946. The Board, comprising 58 members, normally meets twice a year for a period of two weeks each. The meetings are held in Paris, France. Smt. Kapila Vatsyayan is our representative. The 171st Session and the 172nd Session of the Executive Board were held from 12 - 28 April, 2005 and from 13 - 29 September, 2005 respectively. The 173rd Session was held on 24th October, 2005.

India's re-election to the Executive Board

India was re-elected to the 58-member Executive Board of UNESCO for a four-year term. India got 145 votes in the election, an increase of 20 votes over the number polled in the 2001 election. Subsequently, India was also re-elected to the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations and was elected, for the first time, to the select Group of Experts on Financial and Administrative matters.

Contribution of UNESCO's budget

Each Member State of UNESCO contributes to UNESCO's regular budget for each biennium. This contribution is at a fixed percentage approved by the General Conference from time to time. India's share of contribution for the calendar year 2005 is 0.423 per cent of the total budget of UNESCO, which translates into around Rs.6.10 crores. The Budget provision for this purpose for the current year is Rs.688.00 lakhs under Non-Plan. The balance will be adjusted for the calendar year, 2006. The BE for 2006-2007 is proposed at Rs.700.00 lakhs. An amount of Rs. 477 lakhs has since been released towards the contribution.

Construction of a building for housing the office of UNESCO, New Delhi

India is responsible for providing free office accommodation to UNESCO in New Delhi. At present, it is housed in a rented building for which the Indian Government is paying Rs.4.00 lakhs per month. It has been decided to construct a building for housing the UNESCO Office in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. For the 10th Plan an amount of Rs. 3 crore has been allocated of which the budget provision for the current year is Rs. 150 lakhs (Plan).

Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO (PDI)

India has a permanent delegation at Paris accredited to UNESCO. Presently Ms. Bhaswati Mukherjee (IFS-1976) is the Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO.

The Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO (PDI) coordinates and maintains liaison in respect of all the activities viz. participation programme, General Conference, Scientific provisions, Elections and reciprocal support arrangements of ASPAC Group (Asia Pacific Group) between the Indian National Commission for UNESCO (INCCU) and the UNESCO Secretariat.

Education

Education for All (EFA)

EFA was the focus of discussions during the 171st & 172nd Sessions of the Executive Board as well as during the 33rd session of General Conference of UNESCO, where the Director-General was asked by the member States to prepare a global action plan to rejuvenate the EFA thereby establishing UNESCO's role as a lead agency. India played a leadership role in the process.

At the Ministerial Round Table held at UNESCO Headquarters during the 33rd session of the General Conference, the Indian delegation to the meeting was led by HRM, Shri Arjun Singh, who chaired the crucial session on "Overview of Progress and Challenges in



EFA". India played a vital role in drafting the Final Communiqué.

The High Level Group meeting on EFA held in Beijing, China from 28-30th November, 2005 discussed these issues further. The Indian delegation, which was led by Dr. B. L. Mungekar, Member (Education), Planning Commission played a critical role in the drafting process and was able to influence the Final Communiqué, which focused interalia on donor responsibility as one of the important issues for achieving EFA targets.

The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (GMR) on EFA was released in November, 2005. It is a matter of satisfaction that the Report indicates an improvement in India's EFA Development Index (EDI) for 2002 from 0.696 in 2001 to 0.741, which is a reflection of the progress that has been made in various areas. Our own in-house exercise had yielded a more conservative all-India EDI of 0.702, and the higher index calculated by the GMR is a vindication of our efforts.

International Convention Against Doping in Sports

The International Convention Against Doping in Sports was adopted unanimously by the General Conference at its 33rd session. The convention makes an effort at harmonisation at the international level of efforts in the fight against doping in sports. It attempts to go beyond testing and sanctions, calling upon States parties to undertake, within their means to support, and devising of implementing education and training programmes on anti-doping in order to raise public awareness of the negative affect of doping on health and on the ethical values of sport, as well as provide information on the rights and responsibilities of athletes and on testing procedures. The Convention will come into effect with 30 ratifications. India has commenced the process of ratification.

Culture

International Convention on the Protection & Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

The International Convention on the Protection and

Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Cultural Diversity Convention), was adopted at the 33rd session of General Conference by an overwhelming majority. 148 member States voted in favour of the Convention with 2 negative votes (USA & Israel) and 4 abstentions. The negotiations had dominated the proceedings at UNESCO throughout the year. The composite text was the result of an intense intergovernmental negotiation process. The whole issue was whether cultural industries as well as vulnerable cultural expressions required protection or not. Developing countries strongly believed they did require protection. On the other hand, India was sensitive to the need for the language in the Convention not to deviate from or enter into obligations running contrary to the WTO. India was uniquely situated to build bridges between concerned delegations on this issue and emerged as a key negotiator. Ultimately, the Convention fully reflected our national interests while supporting the role of culture in sustainable development. India's position was articulated by Hon'ble HRM at the Plenary of the General Conference, "India believes that the issue of protection of Cultural Diversity is the fundamental mandate of UNESCO to which we are deeply committed. We believe that this draft convention will respond to the needs of the international community and protect and nurture vulnerable traditions and cultures". India will now move ahead on the process of ratification.

World Heritage Convention

From India's perspective, the 29th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Durban South Africa in July 2005 was a complete success, with the Committee approving by acclamation the Valley of the Flowers National Park as an extension to the Nanda Devi National Park and the Nilgiri Mountain Railway as an extension to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

India's Ambassador/PR was elected by acclamation as Vice-President of the 30th session, which is being held in Lithuania in July 06. India also supported the African Group's initiative to establish a special fund to protect African heritage. Subsequently, India contributed US\$ 30,000/- to the Fund.



The Intangible Heritage Convention

In September 2005, India ratified the Intangible Heritage Convention. The Intangible Heritage Convention will come into effect with 30 ratifications.

Oral Masterpieces

Ramlila, the traditional Indian performance of the Ramayana, was accorded 'oral masterpiece of the world' status by UNESCO in November 2005 along with 45 other citations. This was part of UNESCO's third proclamation of masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage, an international distinction that aims to raise public awareness of the value of this heritage which includes popular and traditional forms of expression, music and dance, rituals and mythologies, knowledge and practices concerning the universe, know-how linked to traditional craft as well as cultural spaces.

Memory of the World Register

Saiva manuscripts kept at the French Institute of Pondicherry were among 29 new documentary collections inscribed on the memory of the world register by UNESCO in July 2005. This collection of 11,000 palm leaf and paper manuscripts dating from 600 century AD, in Sanskrit and Tamil, focuses mainly on the religion and worship of the Shiva.

Natural Sciences

23rd Assembly of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

The 23rd session of the IOC assembly saw the establishment of an Intergovernmental Coordination Group to govern the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation system. India was elected to the Governing Council of the IOC by the largest ever margin of victory getting 83 votes, ahead of Japan and China.

The Intergovernmental Coordination Group to govern the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation (ICG-IOTWS) system was established at the IOC General assembly in June. This was a result of

intergovernmental negotiation meetings held in Paris in March and in Mauritius in May 2005. India made it very clear from the outset that an Indian Ocean wide warning system could not be setup without the active participation of India. India had already stated its intent to establish its own Tsunami and ocean surge warning system which effectively covered both the potentially Tsunamigenic seismic zones in the Indian Ocean basin. It had also been announced that nations in the region would be able to benefit from the system. As a result the Indian Ocean tsunami warning system was envisaged as a coordinated network of national systems whose assets would be owned and operated by member States hosting or otherwise taking responsibility for them. The first meeting of the intergovernmental coordination group was held in Perth, Australia in August 2005, which reviewed and assessed the requirements of the system. Secretary, Department of Ocean Development was elected as the first Chairman of the ICG.

Establishment of Regional Biotechnology Centre in India

The 33rd session of the General Conference approved the establishment of a regional centre for biotechnology training in India under UNESCO auspices. This was a result of over four years of negotiations between UNESCO and the Government of India led by Department of Biotechnology. This approval by the General Conference marks the recognition of the dynamism in the field of biotechnology training and research in India and addresses the need for providing greater impetus in the field to the whole of the region, including South and Southeast Asia.

Science Prizes Awarded to an Indian

UNESCO-Treiste Science Prize for 2005 was awarded to Dr. T. V. Ramakrishnan, a DAE Homi Bhabha Professor of physics at Banaras Hindu University for his work in understanding the nature of the physical forces that turned liquids into solids. Dr. Ramakrishnan shares this prize with a scientist from Brazil.

Extension in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve

The Man and Biosphere Council, which met in June



2005, approved the Indian Proposal for extension in the Nanda Devi biosphere reserve. The Council also approved inclusion of 22 new sites in the world network of biosphere reserve under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme.

Communication and Information

Broadcaster's rights issue

At the 171st session of the Executive Board India's proposal seeking to highlight the importance of UNESCO playing a more active role in the deliberations currently taking place in WIPO on the issue of according more stringent intellectual property rights to broadcasting organisations was greatly appreciated. Through this initiative, India was able to sensitise member States about the need to examine the matter very carefully as this would impact the public domain, emergence of new technologies, sharing of information and free dissemination of knowledge – all of which fall under UNESCO's core mandate. During the 33rd General Conference India introduced and successfully piloted an amendment to UNESCO budget, which sought to provide additional resources for UNESCO to participate substantially in the WIPO deliberations.

International Cooperation Cell

International Cooperation: The International Cooperation Cell coordinates the work relating to bilateral and international collaboration in the Education sector and the formulation, implementation and monitoring of Educational Exchange Programmes (EEPs) with various countries with a view to giving a more focused attention to such bilateral collaboration. While EEPs with China, Israel, Guyana, Mongolia, Armenia, Hungary, Myanmar, Tanzania, Syria, Australia, New Zealand, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Mexico and Brazil have been signed, proposals for EEPs with 37 countries including Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, USA, Malaysia, Yemen, Libya, South Africa, Vietnam and Kazakhstan are under consideration. In addition MOUs for mutual recognition and equivalence of degrees, diplomas and

other educational qualifications with several countries like Armenia, Ukraine, Russia and Czechoslovakia are also under consideration. The IC Cell also coordinates the implementation of Education Component of Cooperation with SAARC, Commonwealth, ASEAN and the Mekong Ganga Cooperation Project as well as other bilateral/ multilateral cooperation programmes in the Education Sector.

Visit of Foreign Delegations: Visits by foreign delegations to India at the ministerial level with the objective of strengthening bilateral relations between India and other countries are coordinated by the IC Cell. Ministerial level delegations from UK, New Zealand, China, Bulgaria and Armenia have already visited India and have had fruitful exchange of views for further cooperation. Other important dignitaries from Russia, Thailand, Canada, Singapore, Hungary, Scotland and Brazil also visited India in the recent past.

The IC Cell also coordinates the visit of ministerial delegations from India to various countries.

FDI Proposals: The IC Cell also coordinates the examination of proposals received from the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) and the Project Approval Board (PAB) in respect of the Education Sector.

Auroville Foundation

Auroville, founded by the 'Mother', a disciple of Sri Aurobindo, in 1968, is an international cultural township on the outskirts of Pondicherry in Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu where 1330 people from 35 countries including India live together as one community and engage themselves in cultural, educational, scientific and other pursuits aimed at human unity.

UNESCO by a resolution passed in 1968 had invited its Member States and international non-governmental organisations to participate in the development of Auroville as an international cultural township designed to bring together the values of different cultures with integrated living standards which correspond to man's physical and spiritual needs.



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The Township is under the administrative control of the Ministry since 1980 and is administered as per the provisions of the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988 passed by the Parliament of India.

As per Section 10(3) of the Auroville Foundation Act, the Foundation consists of (a) Governing Board; (b) Residents Assembly; and (c) Auroville International Advisory Council. The Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation, comprising 9 members, was reconstituted on 6th September, 2004. The International Advisory Council of Auroville was reconstituted on 28th October, 2004.

According to the provisions of the Auroville Foundation Act, the Government of India provides grants to the Foundation for meeting the expenditure on the establishment maintenance and development of Auroville under Plan & Non-Plan grants.

The Budget provision for the Foundation for the year

2005-2006 is Rs.331.00 lakhs and is Rs.75.00 lakhs under Plan and Non Plan respectively . Budget Estimate for 2006-2007 has been proposed as Rs. 325.00 lakhs and Rs. 86.90 lakhs under Plan & Non Plan respectively.

For the Tenth Plan period, a sum of Rs. 15 crore have been allocated for the development and construction activities of the Foundation. This includes a new component for supporting the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) for which Rs. 12 crore have been earmarked out of Rs. 15 crores. The balance Rs. 3 crore is for the on-going development and construction activities of the Foundation.

Pending UCs during last 3 years

No Utilisation Certificates (UCs) in respect of grants sanctioned to Auroville Foundation during last 3 years is pending.

