

UNESCO

UNESCO Division 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.

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.

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 (SandHE) its ex-officio Secretary-General and Joint Secretary in charge of 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.

Consequent upon the expiry of the term of office of its previous members, the Indian National Commission for

Cooperation with UNESCO has been reconstituted.

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. For the biennium 2004-2005, the INCCU had recommended 13 proposals from India. Out of these 1 Regional and 8 national proposals have been approved to the tune of Rs. 83,07,000. Four proposals are under process of evaluation.

UNESCO Coupons Programme: The Commission continues to operate the UNESCO International Coupons Programme designed to assist individuals and institutions working in the fields of Education, Science, Culture and Communication to import their bonafide requirement of educational publications, scientific equipment, educational films, etc., from abroad without undergoing the foreign exchange and import control formalities. From January 2004 to December 2004, the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (INCCU) has sold UNESCO coupons worth US \$4,418.23.

ACCU Photo Contests organised by ACCU, Japan, in the Asia and the Pacific region

The INCCU continues to coordinate the participation of Indian photographers in the photo contests organised by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

Scheme of financial Assistance to Voluntary Organisations, 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. 5.00 lakh for the current financial year which was revised to Rs.3.00 lakh. As less number of qualified applications were received from NGOs, an expenditure of Rs. 47,500 has been incurred so far during the year 2004-2005.

No Utilisation Certificates (UCs) in respect of grant-in-aid sanctioned to the NGOs during the last three years is pending.

Participation in Seminars, Working Group Meetings sponsored by UNESCO/its Regional Offices

From January 2004 to December 2004, 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 four 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 Schools Project (ASP net). Associated Schools are educational institutions, which are directly linked with UNESCO Secretariat for undertaking activities relating to education for international understanding, cooperation and peace. On the recommendation of INCCU, 44 schools and Teacher Training Institutions from India have been enlisted with UNESCO under this project. There are 252 UNESCO Clubs and 264 Associated Schools registered with INCCU.

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 meetings of the Sub-Commissions of the Indian National Commission and its full body, organisation of exhibitions, INCCU lecture series and other meetings, in furtherance of UNESCO's aim and objectives. There was a budget provision of Rs. 25 lakh for this scheme

during the current financial year which was revised to Rs. 20.00 lakh. Under this head, an expenditure of Rs. 1,19,521 has been incurred so far.

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, International Conference on Education, Executive Board), Cultural Relations, 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) programme continued to be priority sector for education with the allocation of 53 per cent of total UNESCO budget for the period 2004-2005. The commitment to the Dakar goals was central to EFA. But the lack of sufficient funds was found to be the main obstacle in achieving EFA targets. This was indicated at the meeting of the 5th Working Group on EFA (July 18-21, 2004) and again at the 4th High Level Group meeting in Brazil (November 8-10, 2004). The 52nd session of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) was held in Geneva (September 8-11, 2004), with the Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Arjun Singh, as the Chairman. Attending this meeting, he called on the donors to show commitments to the agreed Dakar goals. Both at the IBE and at the HLG meeting in Brasilia, the focus continued to be on the provision of quality in education.

The education sector also saw formulation of UNESCO-OECD guidelines on cross border education to ensure the provision of quality in education. The second meeting of the Working Group took place in

October 2004 in Tokyo and further elaborated the draft resolution on the issue.

Both the 169th session and 170th Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO held in April 2004 and in October 2004, respectively, witnessed a demand from donor countries on a review of the EFA policies of UNESCO. This resulted in the EFA strategic review, presented at the 170th Session of the Executive Board. UNESCO's role was criticised by the donor countries for not meeting the set targets within the budget allocated while the developing countries, especially the Africa Group, called for further strengthening of the EFA objectives. India said that the EFA priorities had already been set out and called upon the donor nations to show more commitment to the goals set out in Dakar.

Natural Science

Fresh water continued to be the dominant theme in the science sector having been approved for inclusion during the 32nd General Conference in October-November, 2003. The 16th session of the International Hydrological Programme Inter-Governmental Council (IHP-IGC) (September, 2004) saw the inclusion of topics such as study of shared water resources and other data sharing arrangements. This culminated in the launching of Water Cooperation Facility (WCF), a mechanism for mediation on shared water resources, in November 2004.

In the ecological science section, the 18th session of Man and Biosphere (MAB) (October 2004) agreed to include Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve in India in the International network. There were further developments regarding the setting up of the Regional Centre for Biotechnology in India under the auspices of UNESCO. During the 170th Session (September-October 2004), the item was inscribed in the agenda for the 71st session of the Executive Board. The feasibility report has also been completed and a draft agreement between India and UNESCO is being negotiated.

Communication

Free access of information, bridging the digital divide and multilingualism in cyberspace continued to be the

dominant themes in the communication section. This was stressed at the 24th Session of the Intergovernmental Council of International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) (April 2004) and the 3rd session of the Information For All Programme IFAP (May 2004) where Policy Guidelines for the Development and Promotion of Governmental Public Domain Information were also debated. The Communication sector continued its efforts to empower people through access to information under its umbrella community assistance scheme to enable the development of community-based multi-media centres by providing audio-visual hardware and training software development skills among local community residents.

Social Science

The issue of Bio-ethics continued to be the major issue for discussion with serious efforts being made to arrive at a consensus draft for the Universal Declaration on Bio-ethics. Both the Inter-Governmental Bio-Ethics Committee (IGBC) and the International Bio-ethics Committee (IBC), which met in August 2004, further elaborated the theme and presented a draft Declaration to the member states for further debate. India was represented at the IBC and our views have been communicated to the drafting group.

In the philosophy division, efforts were made to elaborate a draft on UNESCO's Philosophy Strategy. As part of the 3rd Philosophy Day celebrations, UNESCO organised a brainstorming session of philosophers from the Arab and Asia regions to chart out the future course of an inter-regional philosophical dialogue. Two philosophers from India were invited but only one attended.

Culture

During the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee Meeting in Suzhou from December 6-11, 2004, three heritage sites from India, namely: Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological park, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly known as Victoria Terminus), Mumbai, and two more Chola

Temples, as an extension to the Brihadisvara Temple, Thanjavur (now renamed as "The Great Living Chola Temples") were inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Progress was made towards the drafting of a new convention on cultural diversity tentatively named "Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expression". The draft convention, as per decision of the General Conference of UNESCO in 2003, is to be submitted to the 33rd General Conference in October 2005.

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. It is the country that is elected to the Executive Board and Smt. Kapila Vatsyayan is our representative for the term till October 2005. We have also decided to seek re-election and have announced that Smt. Vatsyayan will continue to be our representative in the event of our election.

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. The 32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO was held from September 29 to October 17, 2003, in Paris. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, the then Minister of Human Resource Development, had led the Indian delegation to this session.

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 2004 is 0.423 per cent of the total budget of UNESCO, which translates to

around Rs. 6.25 crore. Budget provision for this purpose for the current year is Rs. 613.00 lakh under Non-Plan. The balance will be adjusted for the calendar year 2005. The Budget Estimate for 2005-06 is proposed at Rs. 688.00 lakh.

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

India is responsible for providing rent 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 lakh per month. We have decided to construct a building for housing the UNESCO Office in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi with M/s. Design Plus engaged as the Architects for designing the building. The designs submitted by the Architects have been recently approved by the Ministry. They have been asked to initiate preliminary work towards the construction of the building. For the Tenth Plan period, an amount of Rs. 3.00 crore has been proposed, of which the budget provision for the current year is Rs. 85.00 lakh (Plan), which is included in the budget of the Ministry of Urban Development.



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 1,330 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.

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 headed by Dr. Karan Singh has been reconstituted on September 6, 2004. The International Advisory Council of Auroville was reconstituted on October 28, 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 and Non-Plan Grants.

Till March 2005, an amount of Rs. 80 lakh would be

released to the Foundation under Non-Plan and Rs. 194 lakh under Plan, fully utilising the Budget Provisions for the current financial year.

For the Tenth Plan period, a sum of Rs. 15 crore has 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 the total amount of Rs. 15 crore. The balance Rs. 3 crore is for the ongoing 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 three years is pending.

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 with various countries.

Proposals for bilateral educational exchanges with various countries have thus far been forming an integral part of the Cultural Exchange Programmes, which were formulated and implemented by the Department of Culture. It has since been decided to formulate independent Educational Exchange Programmes (EEPs) with various countries to give more focused attention to such bilateral collaboration. While EEPs with China, Israel, Guyana, Mongolia, Armenia, Hungary, Myanmar, Tanzania, Syria and Australia have been signed, proposals for EEPs with Russia, the USA, Malaysia, Yemen, Libya, Thailand, South Africa, Vietnam, Brazil, New Zealand, Mexico, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are under consideration. In addition, MoU's 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, Mekong Ganga Cooperation Project, etc., as well as other bilateral/ multilateral cooperation programmes in the Education Sector.

Participation in various international conferences is also being looked after by the IC Cell.

Visit of Foreign Delegations

The IC Cell also coordinates the visits of foreign delegations to India at the ministerial level, with the objective of strengthening bilateral relations between India and other countries. Ministerial-level delegations from Vietnam, Union of Comoros, UK, Germany, Myanmar, Norway, Ireland, Singapore, China, Slavic Republic, Zanzibar, Ukraine, Gambia, Solomon Island and Chile have already visited India and had fruitful exchange of views for further cooperation in the field of Education. Other important dignitaries from Bhutan, Russia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Australia, China also visited India in the recent past.

The IC Cell also coordinates the visit of ministerial delegations from India to various countries. Besides, an official delegation led by JS (HE) visited Hungary to attend 1st JWG meeting held in Budapest, and a delegation led by JS (EE) visited South Africa.

FDI Proposals

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

Human Rights Education

In pursuance of the UN General Assembly Resolution on December 23, 1994, declaring the period 1995-2004 as the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, and Programme of Action finalised in October 1995, the Ministry of Home Affairs constituted a Drafting Committee to draw up an Action Plan. The Department of Education was represented on the Committee. The

Action Plan finalised by the Committee was approved by the Home Minister for adoption. It includes various programmes for spreading Human Rights Education among all constituents of the structured educational system as well as strategies for generating Human Rights awareness among the population outside the formal system of education. These action points are at various stages of implementation and are being monitored through regular review meetings with implementing agencies.

Ministry of External Affairs has forwarded a draft plan of action, for the first phase (2005-07) of the proposed World Programme for Human Rights Education, for our comments. This programme, focusing on the primary and secondary school systems, has been jointly prepared by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNESCO in accordance with the Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2004/71. As per the draft Plan, Member-States are required to undertake as minimum action during the first phase (2005-07) of the World Programme, the following:

- an analysis of the current situation of human rights education in the school system (stage 1)

- setting of priorities and the development of the national implementation strategy (stage 2)
- the initial implementation of planned activities.

The main responsibility for the implementation of this plan of action rests with the Ministries of Education through their relevant agencies dealing with:

- education policy
- programme planning
- curriculum development
- teaching and learning material development
- free and in service training of teachers and other educational personnel
- teaching and learning methodologies
- inclusive education
- regional/provisional/local administration
- research and
- dissemination of information

This document is presently being examined in consultation with NCERT.

