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Council of  
Ministers  
of Education,  
Canada

Conseil des  
ministres  
de l'Éducation  
(Canada)

**Education Commission of the  
39<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO General Conference**  
Paris, France  
November 1–4, 2017

**Report of the Canadian Delegation**



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## **1. Introduction**

The Education Commission of the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO General Conference took place from November 1 to 4, 2017, at the organization's headquarters in Paris, France. The General Conference, which is held every two years, determines the organization's budget and the direction of its programmes and activities for the next two years.

Founded on November 16, 1945, the organization currently has 195 Member States and is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board. Irina Bokova has served as Director-General of the UNESCO Secretariat since 2013 and is responsible for implementing the decisions of these two bodies.

This General Conference included the election of a new Director-General, which occurs every four years. Audrey Azoulay, former Minister of Culture for France, was elected UNESCO's Director-General, and will succeed Irina Bokova (Bulgaria), who was re-elected Director-General of the organization at the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2013.

At this past Education Commission meeting, members set priorities and adopted the 2018-2019 education budget, based on the four-year 2018–2021 Major Programme I – Education program. The commission also explored, and made decisions, on a number of issues, including a global convention for the recognition of higher education qualifications, and UNESCO's role in the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda.

Education is one of UNESCO's five key sectors, along with Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication and Information. UNESCO is the only United Nations agency whose mandate includes all aspects of education—from preschool-education development to postsecondary education, including technical and vocational training, non-formal education, and literacy.

In October 2017, both the United States of America and Israel withdrew from the organization. This will take effect in December 2018. Both countries were present during the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference.

## **2. Canadian delegation**

The Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Newfoundland and Labrador, was nominated by CMEC as the Chief Spokesperson at the Education Commission during the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference. Pursuant to the Quebec-Canada agreement on UNESCO, the Honourable Sébastien Proulx, Minister of Education, Recreation, and Sports, Quebec represented Quebec at the Education Commission.

Other members of the CMEC delegation to the Education Commission included:

- Deputy Minister John McLaughlin, New Brunswick;
- Chantal C. Beaulieu, Executive Director, CMEC Secretariat;
- Mr. Sébastien Goupil, Secretary-General, Canadian Commission for UNESCO;
- Antonella Manca-Mangoff, Director, International, CMEC Secretariat;
- Chiara Cautillo, Senior Analyst, International, CMEC Secretariat;
- Marie Macauley, Analyst, Early Learning and K–12, CMEC Secretariat; and
- Kara Connors, Executive Assistant to the Honourable Dale Kirby, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Members of the Quebec delegation included:

- Mr. Sébastien Proulx, Ministre de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport;
- Mr. Jean-François Helms, Conseiller politique, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport;
- Mr. Patrick Gauthier, Conseiller en affaires internationales, Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur; and
- Ms. Catherine Vallières-Roland, Conseillère au pupitre de l'UNESCO, Ministère des Relations internationales et de la francophonie.

Please refer to APPENDIX I for the full list of participants included in the Canadian Delegation to the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference.

### **3. Education Commission**

#### **i. Overview**

A large focus of the Education Commission was the work on, and implementation of, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) on education. There were a number of panels, and side events organized throughout the Education Commission, which focused specifically on SDG4.

#### **High-Level Ministerial Panel Discussion on SDG4 – Education 2030 Strengthening accountability in the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030**

A high-level ministerial meeting on SDG 4 was held on November 1, 2017. This meeting preceded the work of the Education Commission, and provided an opportunity for Member States to share their experiences of strengthening their governance and accountability systems, and to further the understanding of the opportunities and challenges arising from the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 commitments and its effective realization.

Two ministerial-level panel debates on mechanisms to promote accountability and transparency brought together 13 education ministers who highlighted initiatives that their

countries have undertaken to increase accountability and move the Education 2030 agenda forward.

During the first panel on accountability, ministers shared approaches, policy measures, strategies, and tools used by their governments in the context of SDG4, that are enabling effective accountability. During the second panel, ministers presented on ways in which better accountability systems are improving the financing of education, especially from domestic sources. Minister Proulx participated as a panelist for the second panel.

## **ii. Agenda**

Members of the Education Commission considered 10 items on the General Conference agenda, divided into five debates, over three days.

The provisional timetable of the Education Commission's work is available at:

<https://en.unesco.org/generalconference/39/ed/agenda>

<https://fr.unesco.org/generalconference/39/ed/agenda> (French)

The revised provisional agenda of the General Conference is available

at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002489/248939e.pdf>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002489/248939f.pdf> (French)

The organization of the work of the General Conference session is available

at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002489/248940e.pdf>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002489/248940f.pdf> (French)

## **iii. Debates and key messages shared by the Canadian delegation**

### **First debate**

- **Consideration and adoption of Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5) – Part II. A: Major Programme I – Education**
- **UNESCO's role in the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda**

Canada supported the adoption of the draft program and budget, as did other Member States, and expressed its satisfaction with the close alignment between the expected results in the draft programme and budget with SDG4 targets. However, Canada mentioned that the results framework could be improved to better demonstrate how planned activities contribute to the achievement of the organization's expected results.

Minister Kirby spoke about Canada's work on global competencies, noting that it references Indigenous pedagogy, and that it complements UNESCO's work on education. Minister Kirby also shared that Canada will be developing a pan-Canadian assessment strategy for global competencies, including global citizenship and sustainability, and work is being done to ensure that Indigenous students have equal access to all levels of education.

The resolution on the draft program and budget was adopted with amendments.

## **Second debate**

### ***Implementation of 38 C/Resolution 72 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories***

An extended debate on the draft resolution concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories took place, following a request by Israel to open the item for debate. Canada was represented by Ambassador Ayotte, Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to UNESCO. Throughout the debate, Member States expressed their concerns about the procedures and the delays in the work of the commission. Following the terms of the agreement, the draft resolution was adopted by consensus by Member States.

### ***Consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms***

Canada and other Member States encouraged UNESCO, in close collaboration with other related institutions and agencies, to support Member States in putting into practice the values of the 1974 Recommendation. In response to Canada's comment about the low overall participation in the 1974 Recommendation reporting process, and the need to rectify it to have proper data to track real progress on Target 4.7., Dr. Qian Tang, Assistant-Director General for Education of UNESCO, stated that UNESCO would work towards improving reporting rates.

The proposed resolution on the 1974 Recommendation was adopted with amendments.

### ***Consolidated report on the implementation of Member States of the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education***

UNESCO was urged to reinforce the principles of the 1960 Convention, given current practices limiting freedom of education in certain Member States. Member States also underscored the importance of ensuring equal and inclusive education for all. Canada echoed this statement, noting its efforts to strengthen the success of Indigenous students.

The proposed resolution on the 1960 Convention was adopted, with no amendments.

### ***Recommendation on the implementation by Member States of the 1978 Recommendation concerning the International Standardisation of Education Statistics***

During the debate on the 1978 revised recommendation concerning the International Standardization of Education Statistics, Member States underscored the need to reinforce the UNESCO Institute for Statistics' (UIS) data and to provide more support for UIS. Canada explained that it is using the ISCED 2011 classifications in its reporting of education and educational attainment data, and Statistics Canada is officially committed to supporting international standards in classification.

UNESCO agreed with Member States that the revision process for ISCED would not take place before 2021. The Director of UIS, Dr. Silvia Montoya, explained that they would not change the reporting system until the next decade in order to give countries time to adopt the new standards implemented in 2011. UNESCO noted that there has been a high reporting rate for ISCED, as well as ISCED A and F.

### Third debate

- ***Preliminary revision of the 1974 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (1974)***

#### ***Progress report on the preparation of a global convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications***

Member States, including Canada, expressed their support for developing a global convention on the recognition of higher-education qualifications. During the debates, CMEC underscored the relevance of such an instrument, which would enhance university and professional mobility in all regions and strengthen international cooperation in higher education.

Minister Kirby emphasized that such an instrument would need to consider the diversity of education systems around the world, and be flexible enough to be implemented within these systems, as well as within different orders of government. Dr. Tang noted that this would be done; he explained however, that there are financial implications involved with developing such an instrument, and that UNESCO is looking for extra funding and donors to support the process.

During the debate, Member States requested that a special committee to help draft the Global Convention be created. UNESCO announced that the consultation process for developing the draft text for the Global Convention would start in the next 2 years, and that a draft text would be submitted to the Executive Board before the next General Conference in 2019, where it would be submitted for adoption by Member States.

Canada announced its recent tabling of the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention in Canada's House of Commons, and that it expected to deposit the instrument of ratification and its Declaration to the Council of Europe and UNESCO shortly, in order to bring the treaty into force.

The draft resolution on developing a global convention was adopted with the amendment that an intergovernmental special committee open to all member states would be created to help draft the convention. The draft convention will be presented for adoption at the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference in 2019.

The draft resolution on the revision of the 1974 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean was also adopted with an amendment. UNESCO stated that the process for developing a Global Convention and revising the 1974 Regional Convention for Latin America and Caribbean

countries are complimentary, and that these two processes will support one other.

#### **Fourth debate**

##### ***Conclusions of the Youth Forum as regards education***

The conclusions of the 10<sup>th</sup> Youth Forum, held from October 25 to 26, 2017, were presented by two youth delegates. The UNESCO Youth Forum has been an integral part of the General Conference since 2009. Its purpose is to establish ties between the work of UNESCO and that of youth organizations, allowing the latter to submit their recommendations to Member States. The new pilot version of the 10th UNESCO Youth Forum provided an opportunity for concrete suggestions about how UNESCO can improve its engagement with youth.

Canada's delegation to the Youth Forum consisted of two young people, Bushra Ebadi, from Ontario, and Jeremiah Ellis, from Alberta, who also participated as a delegate for Japan due to his dual citizenship. During the Forum, youth delegates shared their recommendations on how to further engage youth in UNESCO's own work. It was also proposed that youth delegates co-plan the next Youth Forum to ensure it reflects their needs and priorities and facilitates the development of partnerships between the organization and young people globally.

Minister Kirby supported these recommendations, and expressed the need for increased accountability of the UNESCO Youth Forum. UNESCO agreed that youth should help develop the format of the Forum, and be given greater opportunity to participate in the Organization.

The resolution was adopted with no amendments.

#### **Fifth debate**

##### ***Establishment of category 2 institutes and centres under the auspices of UNESCO***

Two category 2 centres were established without debate: the establishment in China of a Centre for Teacher Education at Shanghai Normal University and the establishment in China of an Associated Schools (ASPnet) Project Network International Centre.

Following this decision, the board chairs of the seven UNESCO education-related category 1 institutes,<sup>1</sup> or the persons representing them, reported on their activities in 2015–17.

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<sup>1</sup> The seven institutes are the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE), the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP).



#### **4. CMEC and Korea co-hosted Dialogue on Global Competencies and Global Citizenship Education**

As part of the Education Commission, CMEC and Korea co-hosted a High-Level Ministerial Lunch on Global Competencies and Global Citizenship Education. The event fit into the broader focus on SDG4 on education at the Education Commission meetings. Dr. Tang, Ambassador Ayotte and Head of the Canadian Delegation, and Ambassador Lee Byong Hyun offered welcoming remarks and opened the event.

This dialogue was an exceptional opportunity for Minister Kirby and Minister Proulx to highlight Canada's work on global competencies, and profile work in their respective provinces as a centrepiece of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on education and the wider UNESCO Education 2030 Agenda. This event helped to increase CMEC's visibility and Canada's progress on this work during the UNESCO General Conference.

Subsequent to ministers Kirby and Proulx's presentations, Yeonghan Choi, Director General, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea, spoke about lessons learned and challenges in implementing SDG 4, specifically Target 4.7, as well as questions related to global citizenship education.

Following these presentations, Mr. John McLaughlin, Deputy Minister, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, New Brunswick, moderated a discussion with ministers and country leaders, which focused on both the successes and challenges of implementation strategies for global competencies, GCED, and education at large in their respective countries.

The complete Joint CMEC-Republic of Korea Report on the Dialogue on Global Competencies and Global Citizenship Education will be available on the CMEC Web site.

## 5. Main outcomes of the conference

Thanks to the close collaboration between CMEC, the Government of Quebec, Canada's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU), delegates were able to take an active part in the conference and achieve their respective objectives.

Over the course of the five debates, the main issues addressed by UNESCO Member States were:

- UNESCO's role in the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda;
- the promotion of inclusive, quality education;
- the promotion of global citizenship education;
- the development of cross-sectoral policies and the engagement of all parties in the process, including youth; and,
- the importance of developing a Global Convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications.

The General Conference decided to allot an integrated budget of US\$1.2 billion to UNESCO for 2018-19. This includes a regular programme budget of US\$595.2 million as well as voluntary contributions for specific actions from both public and private sources. Approximately US\$396.8 million has been set aside for Major Programme 1 – Education, of which US\$75.8 million is to be allocated the seven education-related category 1 institutes.

It is therefore clear that education remains a top priority for UNESCO.

The complete Report of the Education Commission is available at:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002600/260065e.pdf>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002600/260065f.pdf> (French).

The *Oral Report by the Chairperson of the Education Commission* presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting on November 11, 2017, is available at:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002600/260094e.pdf>

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002600/260094f.pdf> (French).

## 6. Follow-up for CMEC

Given the importance of UNESCO as a priority international organization for CMEC, as well as expected outcomes for key items —the adoption of a Global Convention of the recognition of higher education qualifications—CMEC will be represented at the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference in 2019.

Furthermore, 2019 will mark UNESCO's year of Indigenous Languages, and the 40<sup>th</sup> General Conference could provide an important platform to highlight and share CMEC and CCUNESCO's work on Indigenous education. CMEC will coordinate its participation with the federal

government, and with the Quebec government under the Quebec-Canada Agreement on UNESCO.

CMEC will closely monitor:

- the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda, in view of its importance, scope, and the impact it will have on education in Canada, and globally over the next decade;
- the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda and its alignment with global competencies and the potential for CMEC to share with UNESCO the global competencies assessment framework once developed;
- the implementation of ISCED 2011 classifications, and the development of monitoring indicators (global, thematic, regional, and national) for measuring progress; and
- the development of the draft global convention on the recognition of higher-education qualifications, and participate in the intergovernmental special committee that will prepare the draft text of the Global Convention to be submitted for approval at the next General Conference in 2019.

CMEC members will be kept informed of any development in this file.

CMEC wishes to highlight the outstanding cooperation of CCUNESCO, and acknowledges the excellent work of the staff at Global Affairs Canada, CCUNESCO, the Government of Quebec, and CMEC on the development of Canada's positions.

**APPENDIX I**

**CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE 39<sup>TH</sup> SESSION TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO  
PARIS, FRANCE, OCTOBER 30 TO NOVEMBER 14, 2017**

**Head of Delegation**

Ms. Éleine Ayotte  
Ambassador and Permanent Canadian Delegate to UNESCO  
Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO

**Delegate**

The Honourable Dale Kirby  
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
Council of Ministers of Education Canada

The Honourable Sébastien Proulx  
Ministre de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport  
Gouvernement du Québec

**Alternate Delegates**

Mr. Nicolas Dimic  
Counsellor and Permanent Deputy Delegate  
Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO

Ms. Julie Miville-Dechêne  
Representative of the Government of Quebec  
Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO

Mr. Andreas Weichert  
Executive Director – International Education Division  
Global Affairs Canada

Ms. Dominique Levasseur  
Senior Program Officer  
Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO

Ms. Claude Audet-Robitaille  
Senior Program Officer (Québec)  
Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO

Mr. Saïd Bala  
Senior Policy Advisor  
International and Intergovernmental Affairs and Human Rights  
Canadian Heritage

Ms. Liliane Castets-Poupart  
Policy Advisor – International Education Division  
Global Affairs Canada

Ms. Christina Cameron  
President  
Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Sébastien Goupil  
Secretary-General  
Canadian Commission for UNESCO

### **Advisors and Experts**

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Cabinet du ministre de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

Mr. Patrick Gauthier  
Conseiller en affaires internationales  
Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur

Ms. Anne Rhéaume  
Coordinatrices aux affaires de l'UNESCO  
Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie

Ms. Catherine Vallières-Roland  
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Marie Macauley  
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Kara Connors  
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Mr. Xavier Le Guyader  
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Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Mathias Bizimana  
Program Officer, Culture  
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Ms. Paulie Dugré  
Program Officer, Communication and Information  
Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Ms. Cynthia Lacasse  
Programme Officer, Social and Human Sciences  
Canadian Commission for UNESCO