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Council of
Ministers
of Education,
Canada

Conseil des
ministres
de l'Éducation
(Canada)

**Education Commission of the
36th Session of the UNESCO General Conference**

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Report of the Canadian Delegation

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I. Canadian Delegation to the Education Commission

- Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Minister, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Prince Edward Island), Chief Spokesperson for Education
- Raymond Lesage, Assistant Deputy Minister, Administration and Student Financial Aid Branch, ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Québec, under the Quebec-Canada Agreement on UNESCO
- Christina Vigna, UNESCO Affairs Coordinator, International Organization Division, ministère des Relations internationales
- Agathe Fiset, International Affairs Advisor, International and Canadian Affairs Division, ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Québec
- Antonella Manca-Mangoff, Coordinator, International, CMEC
- Marcel Courchesne, Analyst, International, CMEC

II. Introduction

UNESCO was founded on November 16, 1945 and currently has 195 Member States. The General Conference is made up of representatives of all UNESCO Member States and meets biennially with Member States and Associate Members participating. Non-Member States, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are also invited to take part as observers. Each Member State has one vote regardless of its size or the amount of its budgetary contribution.

At the 36th Session of the General Conference, members of the Education Commission determined policies and areas of interest in the field of education and adopted the 2012-2013 program and budget. The members of the Education Commission also explored a number of specific issues and made decisions concerning them.

The 36th Session of the UNESCO General Conference was notable for the admission of Palestine as a member. This led the US to suspend its financial contribution as required by a US law enacted in the 1990s. The suspension of the US contribution resulted in a budget deficit of US\$65 million, representing about 22 per cent of the total UNESCO budget. To make up this deficit, the UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, launched an Emergency Multi-Donor Fund at the close of the 36th Session of the General Conference.¹

This report will be included in the General Report of the Canadian delegation to the General Conference prepared by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU). As such, it refers only to the Education Commission.

¹ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/general-conference/single-view/news/unesco_director_general_launches_emergency_fund_at_close_of_general_conference/

III. Conference Structure

The members of the Education Commission considered seven items on the General Conference agenda. At the suggestion of the Chair of the Education Commission, Rodolphe Imhoof (Switzerland), the work of the commission was divided into four debates. APPENDIX I contains the agenda items related solely to education. The complete agenda for the General Conference can, however, be found at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002133/213371e.pdf>.

As an addition to the first debate, the youth representative informed members of the eight recommendations on education from the final report of the 7th Youth Forum, October 17 to 20, 2011,² on the theme “How Youth Drive Change”. This forum, organized biennially since 1999, is an integral part of the General Conference and is one of the rare mechanisms through which youth at a global level can submit their recommendations to UNESCO on a regular basis. In Canada, a youth consultation by the CCU was held in September 2011. The Canadian delegation to the forum comprised two young people, one from Ontario and the other from Quebec. CCU, as is customary, also supported the participation of a young delegate to the forum from another country. This year a young Haitian woman was selected.

Lastly, the chairs of the governing bodies of the six UNESCO Category I institutes linked to education³ shared their reports. There was also a presentation on the activities of the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC).

IV. Interventions by the Canadian Delegation

Generally speaking, the four debates were conducted in a climate of relative consensus. The commission Chair, Mr. Imhoof, managed the discussions well within the agenda timetable.

DEBATE 1 – Conclusions of the Youth Forum and review and adoption of the Draft 2012-2013 Programme and Budget

In the first debate, Dr. MacDonald, while underlining the significant efforts undertaken in Canada for Aboriginal education, indicated that Canada was pleased to see that UNESCO attaches a great deal of importance to the principles of equity and inclusion in all of its activities. He went on to emphasize the important role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education, the importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE), as well as education for sustainable development (ESD). Dr. MacDonald further underscored the essential role of UNESCO in ensuring the development of teacher skills to help raise the international status of the teaching profession, while supporting the UNESCO Associated

² <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002134/213427f.pdf>.

³ The six institutes are the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE), the UNESCO International Institute for Strengthening Teacher Development, the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA) and the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC).

Schools Project Network (ASPnet) within its territory. Lastly, Canada reiterated its support for UNESCO, noting the importance of strengthened cooperation with various international organizations working in education, in order to enhance the coordination of action.

APPENDICES II and III contain the interventions presented in English by Dr. MacDonald in Debate 1.

DEBATE 2 – Implementation of 35 C/Resolution 75 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories

The resolution was adopted without debate.

DEBATE 3 – Strategy to make the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) UNESCO’s centre of excellence for curricula

The third debate saw most Member States, including Canada, approve the general principle that the International Bureau of Education (IBE) should become a centre of excellence for curricula. Some concerns were expressed, however, notably with regard to the financial and human resources required to implement the strategy. As did some other Member States, Dr. MacDonald stressed the importance for the IBE to clearly define its priorities based on its comparative advantages and to promote better coordination among various partners of the network, institutions, and specialists. Dr. MacDonald’s intervention during Debate 3 appears in APPENDIX IV.

DEBATE 4 – International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED); Consolidated Report on the Implementation by Member States of the 1993 Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education and the Consolidated Report on the Implementation by Member States of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education

In addition to approving the revised version of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), Mr. Lesage raised the importance of continuing work to define the concepts related to non-formal education.

With regard to the 1993 Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education, Mr. Lesage voiced support for the recommendations of the Executive Committee and also emphasized the importance of revising the six regional conventions and updating them on a regular basis. The Canadian Information Centre on International Credentials and the Quebec-France Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications were cited as examples. Finally, concerning the 1976 recommendation, the importance of ensuring high-quality basic adult education, including literacy, and the need to take lifelong learning into account, were also highlighted. The intervention made by Mr. Lesage in French during Debate 4 appears in APPENDIX V.

V. Main Outcomes of the Conference

Over the course of the four debates, more than 140 interventions were made by UNESCO Member States. The main themes were

- the importance of functional literacy from the perspective of lifelong learning and of both formal and non-formal education;
- teacher training and development as a way of improving the quality of education;
- the urgent need to improve national policies and programs related to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to better respond to the needs of learners and the labour market;
- the ongoing appreciation for the ASPnet and the program of UNESCO chairs;
- the need to make additional efforts with respect to assessment;
- the need to establish conditions to enhance access to ICTs;
- the importance of seeking innovative financial solutions in a context of budgetary restrictions;
- the importance of maintaining gender equality and inclusiveness it as a major priority;
- education as part of an approach focused on the promotion of values related to citizenship, democracy, peace, and sustainable development (ESD);
- the importance for UNESCO of solidifying its leadership in Education for All (EFA);
- the importance of strengthening collaboration between UNESCO and other education partners.

Generally speaking, the Draft Programme and Budget for 2012-2013 maintains the four education priority areas already outlined in the previous two-year term — sectoral policy and planning, literacy, teachers, and technical and vocational education and training.

In terms of specific 2012-2013 UNESCO activities, the members of the General Conference approved a total budget of US\$653 million, of which US\$114,621,300 is committed to Major Programme I – Education with a total of US\$51,136,000 for activities that include Category I education institutes and US\$63,485,300 for staff costs).⁴ Despite a 3 per cent decrease relative to the 2010-2011 budget, education remains at the top of UNESCO's priority list.⁵

In her closing speech, the UNESCO Director-General drew three conclusions: UNESCO must demonstrate stronger leadership, emphasize innovation by taking on new issues with new partners, and effect change and build on the results of the reforms.

The Education Commission Report can be found at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002139/213974e.pdf> and the oral report of the Chair of the Education Commission at the November 7, 2011 session can be found at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002140/214049e.pdf>.

⁴ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002140/214079e.pdf>.

⁵ Major Programme I – Education 2010-2011 budget totalling US\$118,535,700.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations of the Canadian Delegation

In closing, the members of the Canadian delegation were pleased to see that their positions coincided with those of their colleagues from other countries. They agreed that most of Canada's objectives had been achieved.

Given the importance of UNESCO as a priority international organization for CMEC as well as the large number of participants — over 100 delegations, many headed by a minister — it is strongly recommended that CMEC continue to coordinate its participation in the 37th Session of the UNESCO General Conference.

Moreover, CMEC should closely monitor developments in UNESCO's financial situation, particularly with regard to the suspension of the US financial contribution following the admission of Palestine to UNESCO and especially with regard to the medium- and long-term impact on education-related programs and projects.

Lastly, members of the Canadian delegation would like to highlight the outstanding work of the CCU Secretariat in organizing consultations and the contribution of all members who brought their perspective to bear in the development of the position of Canada, as well as the exceptional cooperation between the staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO, and the government of Quebec.

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA IN EDUCATION
OF THE 36th SESSION OF THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

4.2 Consideration and adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2012-2013

In accordance with Articles V.B.6(a) and VI.3(a) of the Constitution, the Draft Programme and Budget prepared by the Director-General (appearing in document 36 C/5) is submitted, together with the recommendations of the Executive Board thereon (36 C/6), for consideration by the General Conference.

Decision required: the General Conference is invited to adopt the Organization's Programme and Budget for 2012-2013, in particular the various resolutions contained in Volume 1 of document 36 C/5.

5.3 Implementation of 35 C/Resolution 75 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories

This item is inscribed on the agenda in pursuance of 35 C/Resolution 75. Document 36 C/17 summarizes progress achieved by UNESCO since the 35th session of the General Conference in providing assistance to educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories.

Decision required: the General Conference is invited to take a decision on the proposals contained in document 36 C/17.

5.4 Strategy to make the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) UNESCO's centre of excellence for curricula

In application of 35 C/Resolution 14, the Director-General submits to the General Conference a draft strategy designed to make IBE UNESCO's centre of excellence for curricula.

Decision required: the General Conference is invited to take a decision on the strategy proposed in document 36 C/18.

5.5 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

In 34 C/Resolution 20, the General Conference invited the Director-General to initiate a consultation of experts, with the participation of representatives of UNESCO and Member States concerned, and also representatives from other relevant international organizations, with a view to submitting an interim report to it at its 35th session, and the revised version of the ISCED to it at its 36th session.

Decision required: the General Conference is invited to take a decision on the proposals contained in document 36 C/19.

5.7 Conclusions of the Youth Forum

In 35 C/Resolution 99 (II), the General Conference invited the Director-General and the Executive Board, when preparing future sessions of the General Conference, to include an item on the results of the Youth Forum in its agenda.

8.5 Consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 1993 Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution and with the specific multi-stage procedure for the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO conventions and recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided, the General Conference is invited to take a decision on this report on the implementation of the 1993 Recommendation.

Decision required: the General Conference is invited to take a decision on the proposals contained in document 36 C/56.

8.7 Consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution and with the specific multi-stage procedure for the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO conventions and recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided, the General Conference is invited to take a decision on this report on the implementation of the 1976 Recommendation.

Decision required: the General Conference is invited to take a decision on the proposals contained in document 36 C/58.

**Intervention of Dr. Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Minister
Debate 1 (discussion unit 1)**

1. Mr. Chairman, fellow ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,
2. On behalf of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, I am honoured to represent Canada at the Education Commission.
3. As some of you might know, in Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Education is under the exclusive jurisdiction of provinces and territories. We have 10 provinces and three territories; therefore there are 13 different education systems in Canada.
4. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), is an intergovernmental body founded in 1967 by ministers of education. CMEC provides leadership in education at the pan-Canadian and international levels and contributes to the fulfilment of the constitutional responsibility for education conferred on provinces and territories. All 13 provinces and territories are members.
5. Canada agrees with the recommendation of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum regarding access to a fair educational system which is linked to the principles of equity and inclusiveness promoted by UNESCO and should continue beyond 2015. One of the challenges for Canada's education ministers is to eliminate the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Concretely, CMEC is organizing a forum on Aboriginal education for the purposes of sharing evidence and experiences in Aboriginal, early-childhood and K-12 education.
6. Moving beyond 2015, Canada emphasizes the importance of involving young people in finding viable solutions to meet the challenges in the field of education, in particular literacy.
7. As mentioned by India, Canada considers that the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for educational purposes is a priority. More than ever, it is important to adopt a coordinated horizontal approach now that ICTs are increasingly centred on issues as disparate as education and climate change.
8. Canada supports UNESCO's efforts to improve its coordination role among Education for All partners. Canada would therefore like more details about how UNESCO plans to implement proposed reforms to better fulfill its coordination role.
9. As stated by both France and Norway, Canada welcomes UNESCO's continued commitment to gender equality in all activities, including in the education sector. In Canada, great efforts are deployed in Aboriginal education to improve the transition to

secondary education and lower dropout rates for both boys and girls. It is essential to strengthen the capacity of Member States to plan and manage gender-responsive education plans and policies.

10. In closing, Canada supports UNESCO in its role as a world leader in education and considers the emphasis on establishing or strengthening collaboration and cooperation among states and organizations to be both relevant and extremely important.

11. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

**Intervention of Dr. Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Minister
Debate 1 (discussion unit 2)**

1. Mr. Chairman, fellow ministers,
2. In principle, Canada agrees with the addendum to the Draft Programme and Budget 2012-2013 and the integrated recommendations of the executive board.
3. Regarding the main line for action 1, the overall focus on literacy education should be accompanied by more attention to the articulation of the various programmes, and be conducted within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012).
4. On technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Canada would like UNESCO to indicate more explicitly that TVET must meet the needs and interests of learners and be aligned to the labour market. It is therefore important to ensure that actions are informed by lifelong learning approaches and to enhance coordination with international organizations already working in this field.
5. Canada also subscribes to the goals and priorities for the teaching profession and teaching personnel stated by UNESCO. To raise awareness and facilitate partnership to ensure capacity development for teachers and raise the status of the teaching profession internationally are essential roles for UNESCO.
6. Regarding the main line for action 2, Canada is extremely pleased to see that preschool educational concerns have been incorporated into a single expected result, one that is broader in scope, to address quality from early-childhood care and education (ECCE) to secondary education.
7. Regarding the main line for action 3, Canada acknowledges the importance of sustainable development and the culture of peace and non-violence. We also acknowledge the continued support to properly complete the work of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. We have noted the changes regarding the education for sustainable development intersectoral platform, Climate Change Education. We would appreciate some clarification on the implications of this change.
8. Canada supports the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network in Canada and recognizes that educational institutions can be agents of change for students by increasing their awareness of the modern values promoted by UNESCO.

9. In closing, Canada supports UNESCO in its role as a world leader in education. Canada advocates concerted action with international forums and organizations working in education to harmonize action more closely.

10. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

**Intervention of Dr. Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Minister
Debate 3**

1. Mr. Chairman,
2. On behalf of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, I am honoured to represent Canada at the Education Commission.
3. As I stated yesterday, it is important to underscore that education in Canada is under the exclusive jurisdiction of provinces and territories.
4. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, is an intergovernmental body founded in 1967 which provides leadership in education at the pan-Canadian and international levels.
5. Generally, Canada wishes to underscore the effort made in document 36 C/5 to focus more rigorously on the major programme of education through various means. These include taking a more integrated and exhaustive approach to core education and by reducing the number of expected results.
6. We would strongly support a more coordinated and focused approach. Canada is also delighted about the ongoing efforts made to align the activities of educational institutes with the priorities of Major Programme I.
7. More specifically, Canada congratulates the efforts of the International Bureau of Education Council members for bringing to our attention the increasing number of requests it receives. We also wish to thank the members for presenting a step-by-step strategy in order to highlight the Bureau's accomplishments and to adapt it to the needs of member countries, while at the same time improving the Bureau's governance.
8. Canada supports strategy A1, which proposes that the International Bureau of Education should clearly define its priorities based on its comparative advantages.
9. Canada also supports strategy B1, which stresses the need for the Bureau to make use of its worldwide network, in particular through better coordination between the various network partners, institutions, and specialists (B1.2).
10. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

**Intervention by Mr. Raymond Lesage, Assistant Deputy Minister
Debate 4**

1. Mr. Chairman,
2. I thank the conference to allowing me speak as a representative of the Government of Quebec and a member of the Canadian delegation.
3. Canada approves the revision of ISCED and will continue to use this structure as the basis for a pan-Canadian framework for comparisons across provinces and territories. We hope the work to define concepts related to non-formal education to continues.
4. As to the 1993 Recommendation, we recognized the great benefits that the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications has brought to members of the Europe and North America Region. We support the Executive Committee's recommendations, and we believe that revising and continually updating the six regional conventions is critical.
5. Individual mobility has become a key aspect of globalization. Canada and Quebec recognize the importance of creating a structure dedicated to performing the necessary functions related to the recognition of professional and academic credentials.
6. To this end, the Canadian Information Centre on International Credentials acts as the information and referral centre with respect to academic credential recognition and fulfills Canada's obligations under the UNESCO recommendation.
7. In Canada, labour mobility between Canada's provinces and territories is facilitated through an intergovernmental agreement. Quebec has also entered into an agreement with France to facilitate and standardize the recognition of professional qualifications for those trained in both territories.
8. Regarding the 1976 Recommendation, we applaud UNESCO for proposing that the first report be devoted to literacy, a key priority identified by ministers responsible for education in Canada. In addition, Canada would wish the timeline for the country reports to be less tight. Canada would support the production of a report every five years.
9. In addition, Canada recognizes the importance of providing adults with high-quality basic education. Canada stresses the need to leverage prior learning and skills through formal recognition, while establishing adequate transitions between various pathways.
10. In this regard, Quebec has invested in the development of mechanisms to recognize prior learning and skills acquired through various life and work experiences not only to

facilitate both the acquisition of credentials and the attainment of labour-market integration objectives, but also to help determine which areas, if any, require additional training to achieve such objectives.

11. We thank UNESCO for supporting Member States in the improvement of their educational systems in order to offer pathways that will enable everyone to develop their full potential.

12. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.