



# South African National Commission for UNESCO



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## Summary of Deliberations:

### Meeting of the Education Sector Committee (ESC) of the South African National Commission (NATCOM for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held on 19 March 2019 at SAQA House, Hatfield, Pretoria, South Africa

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1. The Education Sector Committee (ESC) of the South African National Commission (NATCOM) for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held its first meeting of the year at SAQA House, Hatfield in Pretoria on 19 March 2019.
2. Members noted the following reports: Report by the Secretary-General on South Africa's participation in the 205<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO; Reports from DBE, specifically on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 meeting held in Paris and Report from DHET.
3. Members requested that an urgent meeting be called to discuss the SDGs and South Africa's participation. Mr J Samuels will be approached in this regard.
4. Given the low attendance of the ESC meetings by certain sector representatives, it was decided that a letter would be sent to members who have not been attending meetings informing them that they will be replaced. The Minister would also be informed and nominations for ESC members would be sought.
5. The representative of the Language and Literacy Sector, who had resigned, will be replaced.
6. NATCOM noted that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Board had approved the *Addendum on Qualifications of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. This Addendum is part of South Africa's compliance with the *Addis Convention*.
7. It was reported that the *Addis Convention* had gone through the parliamentary processes and was ready for ratification. A follow up would be made on the status of the ratification instrument.
8. Members noted that Mr J Samuels was in Paris representing the country at the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Intergovernmental Meeting on the Global Convention on Higher education* taking place on 18-22 March 2019. It was requested that a stakeholder meeting be held by September 2019 that will be dedicated to the *Global Convention*. Mr Joe Samuels will be approached in this regard.
9. The meeting noted that the future of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) was uncertain. The IBE, which is part of UNESCO, was funded by Switzerland, however, the funding stopped in 2018. The Executive Board of UNESCO was discussing the future of the IBE, and a number of alternatives were being considered.

10. A new UNESCO Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, has been appointed, who is focused on Strategic Transformation.
11. Members noted that a South African, Dr Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, had been appointed as an Assistant Director-General (ADG) for Science at UNESCO.
12. In relation to the *Request for monitoring information on the 1993 Recommendation on Higher Education with 31st March 2019 as deadline*, a one-month extension will be sought from UNESCO to enable members to provide comprehensive responses.
13. The meeting noted the UNESCO education calendar of events for 2019. It was agreed that:
  - a. Members would share a few important activities that are connected to the UNESCO events, including those related to 8 September 2019, which is International Literacy Day.
  - b. Members agreed that they would harness the work that they are doing in their sectors, to feed into the broader UNESCO programme of work.
14. The ESC programme of work was noted as follows:
  - a. 18 – 22 March 2019: 2<sup>nd</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting on the Global Convention on Higher Education.
  - b. 21 March 2019: Round Table on “Slavery, race and racism: how to break free from racial representations?”
  - c. 22 – 24 March 2019: Global Education and Skills Forum
  - d. 25 – 27 March 2019: A training workshop for postgraduate students at Lebanese Universities
  - e. 25 – 28 March 2019: Meeting of the International Scientific Committee of Volume IX the General History of Africa
  - f. 27 – 29 March 2019: A Training workshop on life and work skills for youth in Lebanon and Syria
  - g. 2 – 3 April 2019: Training workshop on the “Toolkit for strengthening young women and men to act on youth employment: Activities on advocacy and campaigning in Lebanon”
  - h. 16 – 18 May 2019: International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education.
15. The Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education is an important event. The committee acknowledged that the government committee that is focusing on the fourth industrial revolution would benefit from receiving the information on the conference.
16. Ms C Jaftha will participate in a quality assurance meeting that will be hosted by UNESCO – ROSA in conjunction with SADC Secretariat in Lusaka on 3 and 4 April 2019.
17. Botswana (Botswana Qualifications Authority) will be taking over support of the SADC Secretariat from South Africa (SAQA) from 1 April 2019. In this regard, a capacity-building workshop will be held at SAQA on 25 and 26 March 2019.
18. Mr C Mukwevho reported that the ESC webpage was complete and it would go live after authorisation by the Minister.
19. The next ESC meeting is scheduled to take place on 25 June 2019 at SAQA House.

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**Statement by the ESC of the South African NATCOM for UNESCO  
26 March 2019**