



# 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 (SA NATCOM) for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held on 17 September 2019 at SAQA House, Hatfield, Pretoria, South Africa

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### Statement by the ESC of the South African NATCOM for UNESCO 23 September 2019

1. The Education Sector Committee (ESC) of the South African National Commission (SA NATCOM) for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held its third meeting of the year at SAQA House, Hatfield in Pretoria on 17 September 2019.
2. The ESC stated that it supports the position of the President of South Africa and strongly condemned gender-based violence and those aimed at foreign nationals that had tarnished the image of South Africa locally and internationally.
3. Members noted reports from the Department of Basic Education (DBE); Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET); and from the Secretary-General (SG) of SA NATCOM.

#### 3.1 DBE Report

- 3.1.1 The Department of Social Development was hosting a United Nations International Expert on Albinism from 16 – 26 September 2019. The expert was in South Africa to educate people about albinism and sensitise people to the plight of individuals living with the condition;
- 3.1.2 Ms Dululu Hlatshaneni of DBE participated in an Anti-Semitism Conference in Paris in June 2019. Members agreed that, in future, the Secretariat should circulate such invitations among ESC members;
- 3.1.3 The Minister of Basic Education and the Director-General of DBE participated in an International Bureau of Education meeting in South Korea on 20 September 2019; and
- 3.1.4 South Africa appointed a new education *attaché* in Paris, Mr Ishmael Maaria Kgetjepe to replace Mr Yousuf Gabru.

#### 3.2 DHET Report

- 3.2.1 The South African Parliament ratified the *Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa (the Addis Convention)*. Minister Naledi Pandor signed the ratification instrument on 1 July 2019 and deposited it with UNESCO;

- 3.2.2 The ESC hosted a stakeholder consultative meeting on 26 July 2019 at the DBE. The purpose of the meeting was to establish South Africa's position on the draft *Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (Global Convention)*;
- 3.2.3 The Chairperson of the ESC submitted the outcome of the Stakeholder Consultation on the draft *Global Convention* to the Minister of Basic Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Training and copied the respective Directors-General (DGs);
- 3.2.4 The DHET and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) participated in, and presented at, a UNESCO Capacity Building workshop on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from 3 – 5 April 2019 in Lusaka, Zambia;
- 3.2.5 The DHET was requested to advertise twenty (20) fellowships from the Russian International Centre for Sustainable Energy Development co-sponsored by UNESCO; and
- 3.2.6 Professor Veronica McKay from the University of South Africa (Unisa) attended a UNESCO Experts Meeting in Hamburg in May 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a financial cost model for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.6; to consider a vision for adult literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to look at quality assurance and training of educators to reinforce adult learning.

### **3.3 Report of the SG of SA NATCOM**

- 3.3.1 The UNESCO Chairs hosted two meetings at Unisa. The SG and the Vice-Chancellor of Unisa attended the meeting on 19 August 2019;
  - 3.3.2 The year 2019 is the Year of Indigenous Languages. UNESCO is the UN lead agency in celebrating and promoting indigenous languages in 2019. SA NATCOM was providing support, on the importance of South African indigenous languages, to the Provincial Legislatures;
  - 3.3.3 Plans were underway to host the International Jazz Day on 30 April 2020 in Cape Town; and
  - 3.3.4 A meeting of the SA NATCOM will be held on 26 September 2019, especially to prepare for the UNESCO General Conference taking place from 12 – 27 November 2019.
4. The Chairperson of the ESC, Mr Joe Samuels, reported that he and Ms Jaftha had participated in the inaugural meeting of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 2 – 4 September 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to launch the development of the ACQF. The first meeting of the ACQF Advisory Group (ACQF AG) took place on 4 September 2019. The African Union Commission Human Resources, Science and Technology (AUC HRST) appointed Mr Joe Samuels as a member of the ACQF AG. The Chairperson also reported on the successful alignment of the South African National Qualifications Framework (SA NQF) to the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF). He also informed members about an intention to publish a booklet on the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQ) agreement between South Africa and China.
5. Given that South Africa had ratified the Addis Convention, members agreed to be proactive and draft an implementation plan to guide the process.
6. Members noted that the SG of SA NATCOM had sent letters to ESC members who were perpetually absent from ESC meetings. The letters informed them that the Minister would appoint others in line with the Terms of Reference of the ESC.

7. Members noted that the Minister of Basic Education would lead a delegation to the UNESCO General Conference taking place from 12 – 27 November 2019. ESC members agreed to hold a two-hour consultative meeting with the delegates to finalise South Africa’s position on the *Global Convention* and inputs into the agenda of the General Conference. The meeting is scheduled for 4 October 2019, from 10 am – 12 pm at SAQA House.
8. Members noted the ESC programme of events as follows:
  - 8.1 The 2020 UNESCO calendar of events was not yet available on the UNESCO website. The secretariat will circulate it as soon as it becomes available so that members can identify focused activities for the ESC;
  - 8.2 Unisa will be hosting an International Teachers Day event on 1 October 2019. The Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson of the ESC will open the event on behalf of the ESC;
  - 8.3 The theme for International Teachers Day 2019 is “Young Teachers: The future of the Profession.” The ESC will advise the Minister of Basic Education to make a statement about International Teachers Day; and
  - 8.4 The possible dates for ESC meetings in 2020 are as follows: 17 March, 23 June and 15 September. SAQA will host the meetings from 9 – 11 at SAQA House.
- 9 The next ESC meeting is scheduled to take place on 17 March 2020.

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