Item 8.7 of the provisional agenda

COMMEMORATION IN 1988 OF THE BIRTH CENTENARIES OF
DR S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
INDIAN PHILOSOPHER, STATESMAN, FORMER PRESIDENT OF
UNESCO'S GENERAL CONFERENCE
AND FORMER CHAIRMAN OF
UNESCO'S EXECUTIVE BOARD
AND
MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD,
EDUCATIONIST AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF
UNESCO'S GENERAL CONFERENCE

SUMMARY

The above item has been placed on the provisional agenda of the 129th session pursuant to a proposal made by the Government of India in a letter to the Chairman of the Executive Board dated 6 May 1988. This letter is reproduced below.
Explanation for proposal to inscribe 'Commemoration of birth centenaries of Dr S. Radhakrishnan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad' on the agenda of the 129th session of the Executive Board

Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) was one of the leading philosophers and teachers of his time. He served as Professor of Philosophy in the Universities of Mysore and Calcutta, as a Professor of Eastern religions and ethics in Oxford University and as Vice Chancellor of Andhra University and Banaras Hindu University. From 1953 to 1962 he was Chancellor of Delhi University.

Dr Radhakrishnan was closely associated with Unesco in its early years. He was a member of Unesco's Executive Board and its Chairman from 1948 to 1949. He was the President of the seventh General Conference in 1952. Later he was elected Vice President of India and then second President of the Republic of India.

Dr Radhakrishnan's written works include Indian Philosophy, 2 volumes (1923–1927), The Philosophy of the Upanishads (1924), Thought (1939) and East and West: Some Reflections (1935). In his lectures and books he tried to interpret Indian thought for Westerners.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958) was also associated with Unesco but was better known as one of the leaders of the freedom movement of India. He was a distinguished scholar of Islam as a seminal world religion. During the course of the first half of the twentieth century he initiated in India a very significant movement of liberal reform within Islamic ideology. He started his career as a journalist but was caught up in the Indian freedom movement and was twice elected President of the Indian National Congress. As such he led the negotiations with the British for full independence. He was India's first Education Minister, a position in which he continued till his death in 1958. His association with Unesco was not only through the fact that he was the President of Unesco's General Conference in 1956 but that he ensured the application of Unesco's ideals to the educational policies formulated for the newly independent nation.

Considering the impact that the lives of these two personalities had on the international community and their close association with Unesco, it is proposed that their birth centenaries be appropriately commemorated by Unesco.