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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE FEASIBILITY STUDY
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL CENTRE
FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN INDIA,
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO**

SUMMARY

This item has been included in the provisional agenda pursuant to 167 EX/Decision 3.4.3 of the Executive Board which requested the Secretariat to conduct a feasibility study on the above-mentioned Centre. A progress report on this subject was submitted to the Executive Board at its 169th session (169 EX/5). This study concerns the proposed establishment of a Regional Centre for Biotechnology Training and Education in India on the basis of a request submitted by the Indian Government. It reviews the prerequisites for the establishment of the centre, and provides the scientific and institutional rationale behind the Indian proposal. It is accompanied by a Draft Agreement between UNESCO and the Government of India (Annex).

Decision proposed: paragraph 47.

INTRODUCTION

1. A proposal to establish a Regional Centre for Biotechnology Training and Education in India under the auspices of UNESCO, hereinafter referred to as the “Regional Centre”, was submitted to the Executive Board at its 167th session by the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO (167 EX/48).

2. By decision 3.4.3 adopted at its 167th session, the Board, recalling 165 EX/Decision 3.3.1 concerning the feasibility study on the creation of an international basic sciences programme, requests the Director-General to undertake a feasibility study on this proposal and examine, *inter alia*, the possibility of including the proposed Regional Centre as a regional centre of excellence in an international basic sciences programme and to report to it at its 169th session. A progress report was made to the 169th session of the Board and was included in document 169 EX/5 “Report by the Director-General on the follow-up of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its previous sessions”. The present feasibility study is being submitted to the Executive Board pursuant to 167 EX/Decision 3.4.3.

BACKGROUND

3. Recent years have seen a rapid increase in scientific advances in the areas of molecular biology, genetics and bioengineering. These have given rise to new developments and technologies that have a huge potential for application in the fields of agriculture, environmental protection, medicine and industrial development. Biotechnology has made important contributions to increased food production, cheaper and more effective therapeutic and analytical tools in medicine, and the development of environmentally safe technologies.

4. The recent Global Biotechnology Forum, organized by UNIDO in March 2004, identified biotechnology as having high potential to contribute to industrial and economic development, in particular for developing countries.

5. The proposal to establish a Regional Centre for Biotechnology Training and Education in India under the auspices of UNESCO was submitted by India for consideration at the 167th session of the Executive Board (167 EX/48). The basis of the proposal was to establish a modality for effective regional exchange and collaboration in the area of biotechnology training, research and application in order to:

- (a) tap the vast biological resources and human potential in the Asia and Pacific region as a whole and take advantage of these resources for the well-being of the people and for the economic development of the region;
- (b) build capacity and empower people in the region;
- (c) foster increased bilateral cooperation between countries in the region through greater networking and exchange of resources;
- (d) address regional problems, such as poverty, malnutrition, under-utilized biodiversity and biological resources and other areas of common interest, through regional cooperation; and

- (e) build on existing programmes for postgraduate and post-doctoral research and training, scholarships and awards in the field of biotechnology, as well as existing biotechnology centres throughout the region.

6. An information meeting to discuss the establishment of the proposed centre was held at UNESCO Headquarters in June 2003. Representatives from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan attended this meeting and voiced support for the initiative. It was recognized during this initial consultation that more coherent regional cooperation and networking was needed to tap the vast existing potential in the area of biotechnology in the Asia and Pacific region. This was particularly so in view of the need to adapt to new challenges in rapidly developing fields of science such as biotechnology.

7. The then Secretary of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, Dr (Ms) Manju Sharma, made a formal presentation on this proposal to the 167th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO on 18 September 2003. The proposal was welcomed by the majority of Board Members.

8. A consultative meeting concerning this proposal was organized in New Delhi, India in August 2004, to discuss elements of the proposal, and make recommendations towards its eventual implementation.

FEASIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED CENTRE

9. The feasibility study has endeavoured to address requirements specified in document 21 C/36 and 21 C/Resolution 40 and any other aspects deemed useful for assessing the feasibility and viability of the proposed Regional Centre for biotechnology research, training and education. These points are examined in paragraphs 10 to 46 below.

10. It has been proposed by the Indian authorities that the Regional Centre be based initially in temporary facilities at the National Institute of Immunology (NII), Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, New Delhi – 110067, India. This is an autonomous institution of the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, India.

11. In accordance with 167 EX/Decision 3.4.3, a UNESCO mission was undertaken to India in May 2004. A number of centres and institutes were visited:

- (a) As well as the National Institute for Immunology (NII), visits were also made to the following institutions located in New Delhi: the New Delhi Component of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB); National Centre for Plant Genome Research; School of Life Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU); Departments of Biochemistry, Plant Molecular Biology, Microbiology and Genetics, University of Delhi (South Campus). Following the various site visits, discussions were held with Dr M.K. Bhan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- (b) A one day visit to the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC), Bangkok, Thailand was also undertaken in May following the Consultative Meeting on the Establishment of a Regional Training Centre in Biotechnology organized in Bangkok by the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC), from 10 to 12 March 2004. Its purpose was to assess the potential for duplication and complementarity with respect to the proposed Regional

Centre in India, and to gain a more complete picture of how a networking strategy might operate at the regional level.

STATUS OF THE REGIONAL CENTRE

12. The Regional Centre will be an autonomous institution established under national law. It is envisaged that in the initial phase of development (i.e. first five years) the Regional Centre will operate from rented facilities within the NII and be based largely upon the existing facilities and expertise of this institution. Staff seconded from the NII, other academic institutions contributing to this initiative, and visiting/guest faculty from overseas will conduct those training programmes offered during the developmental period. The Director of NII would serve as interim Director of the Regional Centre until the appointment of a permanent director, preferably within a period of six months following approval of the proposal.

13. After the developmental period, the Regional Centre is to be re-located in a separate purpose-built facility located in New Delhi (core facility). Ultimately, at the end of the five-year development period, the Regional Centre would have its own full complement of regular faculty, technical and support staff. Recruitment would commence shortly after approval of the proposal. These staff would be located at the NII until such time as the core facility becomes operational. It is recommended that selection should be based primarily on those areas of biotechnology of greatest interest to the region, and that a regular review of programmes be introduced in order to accommodate emerging priorities.

14. Governance:

- (a) The Board of Governors, which will have the function of guiding the activities of the Regional Centre, will comprise a Chairperson (from India), representatives of countries in the region, and a UNESCO representative.
- (b) The Executive Committee, which will be constituted in consultation with the Board and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Centre, will comprise the Director of the Regional Centre, representatives of the DBT and the Ministries of External Affairs and of Human Resources Development, representatives of three countries in the region (representation by rotation) and a representative of UNESCO.
- (c) The Programme Advisory Committee, comprising scientific, technical and legal experts nominated by the Government of India, countries in the region, UNESCO representatives and experts from outside the region, will provide technical advice for planning, execution, review and monitoring of the programme of the Regional Centre.
- (d) The Secretariat will be responsible for executing the day-to-day activities of the Regional Centre under the authority of the Director of the Regional Centre appointed by the Board of Governors in agreement with the Director-General.

15. The Department of Biotechnology will serve as the Nodal Ministry for the Regional Centre and will coordinate all linkages of the Centre with other ministries/departments of the Government of India.

16. Consultations with countries in the region and others have been organized by the Indian authorities with a view to establishing terms of cooperation with the Regional Centre.

CAPABILITY OF THE NII TO HOST THE REGIONAL CENTRE

17. In terms of infrastructure, the NII is well placed to meet the requirements for hosting the proposed initiative. The campus covers 15 acres and has an excess of 150,000 square feet of office and laboratory space, residential accommodation and recreational facilities. It is very well provided with major equipment and facilities needed for a wide spectrum of biotechnology-related research, advanced training and education.

18. The NII is involved with a number of bilateral and multilateral programmes of the DBT. Its staff, comprising some 35 principal investigators and a number of independent research groups consisting of project-related staff and postgraduate students, are highly trained and active scientists who, both individually and collectively, have an impressive track record in terms of research output and training experience.

19. The NII has good working relations with other national and international academic institutions engaged in biotechnology-related research and training, offering expertise in various areas of biotechnology. This is coupled with excellent travel links to other national capitals within the region, and the ready access to equipment maintenance services and consumable research items available through the many suppliers with offices located in New Delhi.

20. In summary, the NII has the capacity to host the Regional Centre given its sound background and expertise in biotechnology-related research and human resource development. There was a strong and clear commitment to this initiative on the part of all academic staff. Any gaps that may exist in expertise will be overcome by seconding personnel with appropriate expertise from national institutions, those located within the region, or internationally.

KEY OBJECTIVES AND MODALITIES OF THE PROPOSED REGIONAL CENTRE

21. Consultations have identified the overall goal of the proposed Regional Centre to be an increase in the capacity for biotechnology research, application and commercialization throughout the region by:

- (a) providing scientific postgraduate training, both short and long-term, in specified areas to trainees from countries in the region with the aim of upgrading the level of biotechnological expertise of the region. This would include fellowships, training courses and workshops incorporating both specialized and project-oriented training;
- (b) establishing links between academia and industry in order to facilitate information transfer between the public and private sectors, and the development of well-planned and relevant biotechnology-based industries in participating countries;
- (c) addressing both common and specific problems relating to food supplies, human health, environmental issues, etc., and which are of relevance to the region;
- (d) networking and developing collaborative R&D and training programmes at regional and international levels including linking of designated nodal centres in participating countries; and
- (e) information exchange and dissemination.

22. The priorities of the Centre will include postgraduate, doctoral and post-doctoral education and training, short- and long-term training courses and workshops, exchange visits by scientists,

collaborative research and development projects, and networking in specialized areas of biotechnology. Short-term programmes will cater to specific areas of interest in keeping with needs and priorities identified.

REGIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE REGIONAL CENTRE

23. The original proposal views the Regional Centre as “the focal point for cooperation among Member States of the Asia region” and refers to South-East Asia, South Asia and the SAARC countries.

24. Upgrading of national and regional capacity in terms of biotechnological expertise and ensuring effective transfer of appropriate technologies are an important means of securing long-term self-reliance and sustainable development; these remain a priority for many Member States.

25. Scientific exchange will reinforce existing collaboration in the region and promote new partnerships through the development of mutually beneficial research and development programmes.

26. The focus of activities of the Regional Centre will be demand-driven and directed towards problems relating to food supplies, human health, environmental issues, etc., indigenous to the region. This will address priority issues for the region and also promote sustainable exploitation of indigenous biological resources.

27. The Regional Centre will aim towards the establishment of a functional infrastructure within the region for collaborative research, technology transfer and information dissemination. Furthermore, it will foster the development and expansion of biotechnology-related industries in the region.

POTENTIAL DUPLICATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER EXISTING CENTRES

28. In this context, the visit to BIOTEC in Bangkok, Thailand, was very informative. Both the facilities and associated research activities at BIOTEC are of a high standard. BIOTEC also undertakes collaborative research and development with other specialized laboratories at universities and government agencies throughout Thailand, and with public and private organizations overseas, including promoting the development and application of biotechnology with Thai and international business interests.

29. While there could be some duplication of training provisions, nevertheless:

- (a) the current demand for the kinds of training envisaged by both centres probably far outstrips the capacities of both centres combined to provide such training, especially in areas likely to be of greatest interest (e.g. agricultural biotechnology) to the region;
- (b) while any form of demarcation (e.g. regional, areas of training) should not be rigid, there is considerable incentive for collaboration rather than competition. Many forms of training envisaged are expensive in terms of manpower, equipment, and running costs and it would be in the interests of all parties concerned to consider coordination of efforts;

- (c) although experience of other, distinct cultures is normally regarded as desirable, a choice of training locations in the region may be important for those trainees likely to flourish in an environment where cultural traditions are more akin to their own.

RESULTS OF REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING

30. At a regional consultative meeting organized in New Delhi, India, in August 2004 to discuss elements of this proposal, representatives of 17 countries from the region attended to discuss the status of biotechnology in the region, regional priorities and needs, networking and regional cooperation and to make recommendations towards implementation of the proposal.

31. The major outcomes were:

- (a) all participating countries unanimously agreed on the need to establish the Regional Centre and strongly expressed the need for human resource development in the area of biotechnology;
- (b) emphasis on the fact that the Regional Centre should play a catalytic role in developing joint research and development programmes in priority areas of biotechnology;
- (c) the desirability of the Regional Centre functioning in a network mode. Interested countries would be requested to designate satellite centres to network with the Regional Centre and, further, nominate a nodal officer for coordinating all aspects concerning the Regional Centre;
- (d) training institutes could be in India or elsewhere in the region. In this context, countries participating in this initiative would be requested to provide names of centres of excellence in the field of biotechnology to serve as satellite centres;
- (e) countries participating in this initiative might be asked to contribute through subscription fees, whose amount would be decided on by the appropriate administrative body of the Regional Centre;
- (f) agreement that a core fund would be established with contributions from the DBT, participating Member States and extramural sources, to meet costs for the organization of training activities. The size of this fund would be determined by the number of participating countries and the number of training events to be organized, and could be determined by a formula based on the United Nations scale of assessment; and
- (g) where satellite centres were involved, it could be envisaged to secure some additional resources from the host country.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

32. This issue (see paragraph 2 above) is not immediately relevant given that the International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP) is still in the early stages of its formation.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

33. The Government of India will provide land on which the Regional Centre will be built and will bear the costs of its construction and equipping the Regional Centre. Further, the Government of India will meet the recurring costs for staffing, consumables and other contingencies. Apart from the costs for construction, the Government of India has made a commitment of US \$5.5 million for the five-year initial phase of this proposal.

34. Following the initial phase, the Government of India will continue to provide funding to meet the recurring costs in accordance with national laws governing autonomous centres. It is also envisaged that financing would be sought from international funding agencies, from the private sector through joint R&D development and technology transfer arrangements, and through a “core fund” to which participating countries could make contributions. If the Regional Centre is to be truly collaborative, and a sense of genuine participation is to prevail, some contribution is essential from participating countries in the region. Financial contributions from such countries should provide support towards their participation in the administrative structures of the Regional Centre and for trainees. In addition, it is anticipated that UNESCO could provide some support for training activities, fellowships etc., in keeping with available resources and programme priorities in this field.

AREAS OF COOPERATION WITH UNESCO

35. UNESCO could participate in cooperative activities, as appropriate and as funds allow, including:

- (a) during the development phase facilitation of scientific exchanges at the regional level;
- (b) provision of support to visiting students by means of UNESCO Fellowships including Microbial Resources Centres (MIRCEN) and Biotechnology Action Council (BAC)-type fellowships, through the usual competitive process;
- (c) provision of seed support for activities and projects and facilitation of access to training opportunities within the framework of the BAC and MIRCEN programmes. In this regard UNESCO will promote collaborative scientific exchange of the Regional Centre with the MIRCEN and Biotechnology Education and Training Centres (BETCEN) in the region, as well as with other centres making significant contributions to the field of biotechnology;
- (d) participation in the screening of trainees nominated for UNESCO Fellowships and facilitation of access to extrabudgetary funds from bilateral donors where available and appropriate; and
- (e) technical assistance and advocacy.

RELATIONSHIP TO UNESCO'S OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMMES

36. UNESCO is not expected to have any legal or financial obligation towards this Regional Centre. The establishment of the Regional Centre is, however, consistent with UNESCO's objective of strengthening scientific capacity and infrastructure at the national and regional levels, and in this regard links may be established and support provided towards the strengthening of the Regional Network for Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology in South-East Asia.

37. The Regional Centre should also cooperate actively with centres having an established and long-term collaboration with UNESCO in the region within the framework of the MIRCEN network and the BAC programmes. These have already been identified based on their high-level of research and training in specific areas of biotechnology and their collaboration can only be complementary to development of activities in this field.

38. The UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector is particularly in favour of networking as a means of scientific exchange and technology transfer and this initiative will therefore fall well within this modality of collaboration. This initiative is timely and fully in keeping with the concept of the International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP), which is in the initial phase of its operation. The potential benefit of a network of biotechnology institutes to the region is significant.

CONCLUSIONS

39. This feasibility study has shown that there are sound justifications for the establishment of such a Centre in the Asia and Pacific Region. The proposal has a clear set of objectives with well-defined modalities for achieving those objectives. During the brief consultative process with countries of the region, it has become clear that such an initiative is necessary.

40. It would help to meet several of UNESCO's objectives relating to South-South scientific exchange and intraregional networking and cooperation for development. Due consideration needs to be given in the initial phase to the role and position of this proposed Centre in relation to the other existing national and international centres in the region, and the investment of human and financial resources required for its launch and continuity. In the medium to long-term it will be necessary to seek extrabudgetary funding and develop a strategy to attract donor funds on a regular basis.

41. The proposed Regional Centre will support the development of human capacity in the region, with the ultimate objective of long-term self-reliance. It will assist the development of joint research and training programmes among scientists of the region, ensure mobility of researchers and greater accessibility to information and new technologies.

42. The Government of India has shown strong commitment to establishing the proposed Regional Centre. While the Regional Centre will be autonomous, the Government of India, through the Department of Biotechnology, has made a commitment to provide substantial financial support through funding for its construction and long-term running costs.

43. Countries in the region would be requested to contribute towards proposed "core funds", either in terms of a monetary contribution or contributions in kind towards travel and support to their nominees for training/fellowships.

44. UNESCO will provide some start-up catalytic support only, within the resources available. Should this proposal be further approved and developed, the proposing Member State will be encouraged to submit an appropriate request for support under the Participation Programme.

45. There is strong support for this proposal from the DBT, the NII and from potential national partner institutions.

46. In this regard the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) New Delhi Component has agreed to work in close collaboration and to provide assistance and support to the proposed Regional Centre in attaining its objectives within the region.

PROPOSED DRAFT DECISION

47. In light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 167 EX/Decision 3.4.3 requesting the Director-General to undertake a feasibility study on this proposal and examine, *inter alia*, the possibility of including the proposed Regional Centre as a Regional Centre of Excellence in an international basic sciences programme,
2. Having examined document 171 EX/9 and its Annex,
3. Aware of the importance of international and regional cooperation for the development of science and technology in Asia and the Pacific,
4. Welcoming the proposal of the Government of India,
5. Takes note of the observations and conclusions of the present feasibility study; and
6. Deeming the considerations and proposals contained therein to be such as to meet the requirements needed for UNESCO to grant its auspices to the Regional Centre;
7. Recommends to the 33rd session of the General Conference to approve the establishment of the Regional Centre for Biotechnology Training and Education in India under the auspices of UNESCO and authorizes the Director-General to negotiate and sign an appropriate agreement, it being understood that the obligations of UNESCO shall not be other than those indicated in the Annex attached hereto.

ANNEX

**DRAFT AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AND THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)
CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL CENTRE
FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN INDIA**

Whereas the General Conference, at its 33rd session, decided that a Regional Centre for Biotechnology Training and Education would be established in India under the auspices of UNESCO,

Whereas the Government of India has contributed and stands ready to contribute further to the establishment and operation of the Regional Centre in its territory,

Bearing in mind that the Government of India has already taken a number of effective measures and steps to ensure the necessary infrastructure and facilities for the Regional Centre,

Desirous of concluding an agreement with a view to ensuring the establishment and operation of the said Regional Centre and to defining the terms and conditions governing the support that it shall be granted, under the guidelines laid down by the General Conference (21 C/Resolution 40) for regional centres set up by a State with UNESCO's participation.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, hereinafter called "UNESCO", and the Government of India, hereinafter called "the Government",

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

**Article I
Establishment**

The Government agrees to take any measures that may be required for the setting up of the Regional Centre for Biotechnology Training and Education in India hereinafter called "the Regional Centre", as provided for under this Agreement.

**Article II
Participation**

1. The Regional Centre shall be an autonomous institution at the service of Member States of UNESCO that, by their geographical proximity to the Regional Centre and their common interest in its objectives in the field of biotechnology, desire to cooperate with the Regional Centre.

2. Member States of UNESCO wishing to participate in the Regional Centre's activities, as provided for under this Agreement, shall send the Director-General of UNESCO notification to this effect, as well as the designation of a national institution working in the field of biotechnology that shall be competent to represent the Member State. The Director-General shall inform the Regional Centre and the Member States mentioned in Article II, paragraph 1, above, of the receipt of such notifications.

Article III Objectives and Functions

1. The objectives of the Regional Centre are:
 - (a) To promote capacity-building through education and training, research and development in biotechnology for sustainable development objectives through regional and international cooperation;
 - (b) To facilitate transfer of knowledge and technology on biotechnology at the regional level;
 - (c) To create a hub of biotechnology expertise in the SAARC region, South-East Asia and South Asia subregions, and to address human resources needs in those regions;
 - (d) To create a network of satellite centres in these subregions;
 - (e) To promote and strengthen South-South cooperation.

2. The functions of the Regional Centre shall be:
 - (a) To execute educational and training activities to transfer knowledge in biotechnology;
 - (b) To undertake research, development and scientific investigation in collaboration with relevant research centres in the region;
 - (c) To hold scientific symposiums and conferences (regional and international) and to conduct short-term and long-term training courses and workshops in all areas of biotechnology;
 - (d) To collect universally available information with a view to setting up a data bank;
 - (e) To collect and disseminate, through networking, the relevant local knowledge;
 - (f) To publish and disseminate the outcomes of research activities in different countries through books, articles, etc.;
 - (g) To promote collaborative R&D networking programmes in specific areas of biotechnology and exchange and mobility of scientists at the regional level in this context with due consideration for issues pertaining to intellectual property rights of collaborating institutions.

3. The Regional Centre shall pursue the above objectives and functions in close collaboration with other relevant regional and international networks, the centres collaborating with UNESCO, Microbial Resources Centres (MIRCENs) and Biotechnology Education and Training Centres (BETCENs) in the region.

4. The Regional Centre shall carry out the above functions dependent on the extent to which regional and international resources can be mobilized.

Article IV Governance

1. Board of Governors:

- (a) The Regional Centre shall be administered by a Board of Governors composed of:
 - (i) a representative of the Government;
 - (ii) a representative of each of the other Member States that: (1) have sent the Director-General of UNESCO notification, as provided for under Article II, paragraph 2, above; or that (2) make a substantial contribution to the operating budget or running of the Regional Centre, and are thus accorded a seat by a decision of the Board of Governors;
 - (iii) a representative of the Director-General of UNESCO.
- (b) The Secretary of the Department of Biotechnology, Minister of Science and Technology, of the Government of India shall be the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The person he/she designates shall be the representative of the Government.
- (c) The Board of Governors shall have all the powers required for the running and administration of the Regional Centre. It shall:
 - (i) approve the annual work plan and budget of the Regional Centre;
 - (ii) examine the annual reports submitted by the Director of the Regional Centre as provided under Article VI below;
 - (iii) study and approve the Centre's internal procedures, including financial regulations and staff rules;
 - (iv) approve the Regional Centre's Chart and number of staff; and
 - (v) convene special consultative sessions to which it shall invite, in addition to its own members, the Director of the Regional Centre and representatives of other interested countries and international organizations, in order to obtain proposals for strengthening the scope of services of the Regional Centre and for carrying out projects and activities relevant to the Regional Centre, and to expand the Regional Centre's fund-raising strategy and capabilities.
- (d) The Board of Governors shall meet in ordinary session once a year; it shall meet in an extraordinary session if summoned by the Chairperson, either on his own initiative or at the request of at least half of its members.
- (e) The Board of Governors shall adopt its own rules of procedure. For the first meeting the procedure shall be established by the representative of the Government and UNESCO.

2. Executive Committee:

- (a) To be constituted in consultation with the Board of Governors for the day-to-day management of the Centre.

- (b) It will comprise the Director of the Regional Centre, representatives of the DBT and the Ministries of External Affairs, and Human Resources Development, representatives of three countries in the region (representation by rotation) and UNESCO.

3. Programme Advisory Committee:

- (a) Comprising scientific, technical and legal experts nominated by Government of India, countries in the region, UNESCO and experts from outside the region.
- (b) This body would be constituted to provide technical advice for planning, execution, review and monitoring of the programme of the Regional Centre.

4. Secretariat:

To execute the day-to-day activities of the Regional Centre under the authority of the Director of the Regional Centre.

Article V
Secretariat

1. The Regional Centre's Secretariat shall consist of a Director and such staff as is necessary for the proper functioning of the Regional Centre.
2. The Director shall be appointed by the Board of Governors in agreement with the Director-General of UNESCO.
3. The other members of the Secretariat may comprise:
 - (a) members of UNESCO's staff who would be made available to the Centre, as provided for by the Organization's regulations;
 - (b) any person appointed by the Director, in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Board of Governors;
 - (c) Government officials who would be made available to the Regional Centre, as provided by Government's regulations.

Article VI
Duties of the Director

1. The Director shall discharge the following duties:
 - (a) direct the work of the Regional Centre in conformity with the programmes and directives established by the Board of Governors;
 - (b) propose the draft work plan and budget to be submitted to the Board of Governors for approval;
 - (c) prepare the provisional agenda for the sessions of the Board of Governors and submit to it any proposals that he may deem useful for the administration of the Regional Centre;
 - (d) prepare reports on the Regional Centre's activities to be submitted to the Board of Governors;
 - (e) represent the Regional Centre in law and in all civil acts.

Article VII Financial Arrangements

1. The Regional Centre's resources shall derive from catalytic funds allotted by the Government and, for start-up activities, by UNESCO subject to the decisions of the General Conference, as well as from such contributions as it may receive from other Member States of UNESCO within the region for the establishment of a core fund following an agreed process through the administrative mechanisms of the Regional Centre, from external sources to be explored with intergovernmental organizations or international non-governmental organizations, and from payments for services rendered. The Member States may also provide voluntary contributions towards the core fund including contributions in form of deputation of scientists, researchers, teachers, officers etc.
2. The travel costs of the representatives of Member States in the administrative bodies for participation in the working sessions of the Regional Centre shall be met by the Member States participating in this initiative. The local costs will be covered by the core fund.
3. The Regional Centre may, with the approval of the Board of Governors, receive gifts and legacies.

Article VIII Contribution of the Government

1. The Government shall provide the Regional Centre with appropriate office space, equipment and facilities.
2. The Government shall contribute special funds that shall cover:
 - (a) the salaries and compensations of the Secretariat staff, including the Director, and make available to the Regional Centre the necessary staff;
 - (b) the communication, utilities and maintenance costs of the Regional Centre, plus the expenses of holding the sessions of the Board of Governors and special consultative sessions;
 - (c) funds towards the implementation of studies, training, and publication activities, complementing the contributions from other sources.

Article IX Contribution of UNESCO

1. UNESCO will provide technical assistance as and when required and as appropriate, for the establishment and operation of the Regional Centre, including assistance in the formulation of the short-term, medium-term and long-term programmes of the Regional Centre.
2. UNESCO will provide some catalytic support within the framework of the regular biennial Programme and Budget (C/5 document), particularly for start-up activities of the Regional Centre, it being understood that UNESCO may only contribute financially to concrete activities/projects of the Regional Centre if those are deemed in line with UNESCO's programme priorities. UNESCO will not, however, provide financial support for administrative or institutional purposes.
3. It will encourage the international governmental and non-governmental financial entities, as well as Member States of UNESCO, to provide financial and technical assistance and to propose

applicable projects to the Regional Centre and will facilitate the contacts with other international organizations relevant to the functions of the Regional Centre.

4. It will provide the Regional Centre with relevant UNESCO publications and other pertinent material and will disseminate information on the activities of the Regional Centre via the UNESCO website and other newsletters and mechanisms at its disposal.

5. It will participate, when appropriate, in the scientific, technical and training meetings held by the Regional Centre.

Article X **Legal Status, Privileges and Immunities**

1. The Regional Centre shall enjoy on the territory of India the personality and legal capacity necessary for the exercise of its functions.

2. The Government shall apply to UNESCO and its officials and experts and to the representatives of Member States and Associate Members attending the sessions of the governing bodies and the Programme Advisory Committee, the provisions of the 1947 United Nations Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies to which it has been party since 1949.

3. The Government shall authorize the entry, free of visa charges, the sojourn on its territory and the exit of any person invited to attend the sessions of the Board of Governors or proceeding to the Regional Centre on official business.

4. The goods, assets and income of the Regional Centre shall be exempt from all direct taxes. Further, the Regional Centre shall be exempt from the payment of any fees or taxes with respect to equipment, supplies and material imported or exported for its official use.

5. The Regional Centre may have accounts in any currency, hold funds and foreign exchange of any kind and transfer them freely.

6. The Government shall be responsible for dealing with any claims which may be brought by third persons against UNESCO, against members of its staff or against other persons employed by the Regional Centre and shall hold UNESCO and the above-mentioned persons harmless from any claims or liabilities resulting from operations of the Regional Centre under this Agreement, except where it is agreed by UNESCO and the Government that such claims or liabilities arise from the gross negligence or wilful misconduct of such persons.

Article XI **Final clauses**

1. The present agreement shall come into force upon its signature by the two parties. It shall remain in force for a period of six years following its date of entry into force and may be reviewed for a similar period as agreed upon between the parties provided that the renewal of the designation of the Regional Centre as a category II centre has been recommended by the Executive Board of UNESCO.

2. The present Agreement may be revised by consent between the Government and UNESCO.

3. Either party shall have the right to terminate this Agreement by giving six months prior written notice to the other party.

IN FAITH WHEREOF, the undersigned representatives, duly authorized, have signed the present Agreement in two original copies.

For the Government of India:

For the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization:

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(representative of the Government)

(representative of the Organization)