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**PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNESCO OBSERVATORY ON
WOMEN, SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

SUMMARY

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 175th session of the Executive Board at the request of the Government of Greece.

Following the initial proposal by the Government of Greece to establish a UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education at the Greek Secretariat General of Sport, Ministry of Culture, the Fourth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS IV) held in Athens, in 2004, adopted a recommendation (Rec.1 of Commission III) welcoming the establishment of the Observatory. It further requested that a concrete project be prepared for submission to UNESCO.

The Observatory will be financed by the Greek Government, and thus there are no financial implications for UNESCO.

An explanatory note, together with a proposed decision, is attached.

Decision proposed: paragraph 30.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. It has been widely recognized and emphasized in many international conferences and meetings that sport and physical education play a crucial role in the lives and the development of women and girls, in particular building health, self-esteem and self-confidence, encouraging participation and achievement in education and promoting social cohesion and inclusion in social and community life.

2. Commission III of the Fourth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS IV) held in Athens, in 2004, discussed the interest and concern of the international leaders in dealing with the position of women in sport and, namely, the lack of a central depository for documentation relating to women and sport. It also emphasized the need for clear evidence and data to support strategies to increase investment in programmes to promote opportunities for women and girls in sport and physical education. MINEPS IV (Commission III) in its recommendations welcomed “the generous offer of the Greek Ministry of Sport to provide the financial and human resources to support the development and maintenance of a web-based observatory on women, sport and physical education, to be established under the aegis of UNESCO” and requested “that a Steering Group comprised of officials from the Greek Government, UNESCO and representatives of key international bodies with a mandate in women and sport, meet with a view to preparing a concrete project description for presentation to UNESCO...”.

3. The present document addresses new developments since the recommendation made by MINEPS IV, historic decisive moments for the international movement on women and sport issues that have led to this proposal. Moreover, it includes a summary description of the project proposal.

4. In 1994, an International Conference on Women and Sport was held in Brighton, United Kingdom, which in its declaration, the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport of 1994, stated that “The conference agreed to establish and develop an international women and sport strategy that encompasses all continents. This should be endorsed and supported by governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in sport development. Such an international strategic approach will enable model programmes and successful developments to be shared among nations and sporting federations, so accelerating the change towards a more equitable sporting culture worldwide”.

5. At its 2nd International Conference in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1998, the International Working Group, formed at the Brighton Conference to monitor the implementation of its declaration, emphasized in its Call for Action the necessity to “promote and share information about the positive contribution that girls’ and women’s involvement in sport makes, *inter alia*, to social, health and economic issues”.

6. The Greek Government, namely the Secretariat General of Sport, Ministry of Culture, organized under the auspices of UNESCO, in Athens, Greece (August 2001) an international conference entitled “The position of Women in the Administration of Sport”. This international conference adopted a declaration, the Declaration of Athens, which recommended “...in collaboration with UNESCO, the setting up of an Observatory whose role will be to track and evaluate the progress made at national and international level on the promotion of women in all areas of sport”, and thus marked the beginning of the recognition by UNESCO Member States that

an Observatory on Women and Sport would address issues raised in a number of other declarations and calls for action.

7. In pursuance of the recommendation of MINEPS IV, the Greek Government organized a Steering Group meeting, from 29 to 31 March 2006, formed by officials of the Greek Government, CIGEPS, UNESCO and representatives of key international bodies in order to develop a concrete project description for submission to UNESCO.

8. In May 2006, the 4th International Working Group World Conference on Women and Sport was held in Kumamoto, Japan. The representative of the Greek Government, member of the CIGEPS, and President of the CIGEPS Working Group on Women and Sport, presented the project concerning the establishment of the UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education. The international conference, in its final conclusions, supported the establishment of the UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education.

9. The project drawn up by the Steering Group and the annual budget estimate were officially submitted to the Director-General of UNESCO in June 2006, before being submitted to the Executive Board at its 175th session.

10. In July 2006, the Greek Government, in its answer to the questionnaire relating to the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 (34 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2008-2009 (34 C/5), recommended that the project be made one of UNESCO's flagship projects. The Observatory will contribute greatly to the organization and systematization of existing information and data and will increase progress towards the achievement of the UNESCO goals in this area. The Observatory's innovative character could serve as an exemplary contribution by a Member State to one of UNESCO's aims, namely to raise awareness of the significant benefits of the educational, social and moral values of sport and physical education and their crucial role in achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

II. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL

A. Objectives

11. The general objectives of the Observatory on "Women, Sport and Physical Education" are:

- (a) to facilitate the follow-up and concrete implementation of the recommendations of the various international conferences on women and sport;
- (b) to achieve better synergies with regard to competencies and experiences in this area;
- (c) to capitalize on common efforts of all actors in sport and physical education in order to harmonize the development of policies and programmes in these areas.

12. The specific objectives are the following:

- (a) to contribute to greater knowledge and sound decision-making with respect to policies and programmes for women, sport and physical education;
- (b) to gather, organize, analyse and disseminate worldwide information on women, sport and physical education;
- (c) to stimulate research in areas where gaps exist;

- (d) to engage those interested in women, sport and physical education in dialogue and debate on current issues.

13. In general, the Observatory on “Women, Sport and Physical Education” will significantly contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Its establishment will also mark the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, in 2007.

B. Functions and structure

14. Functions: the functions of the UNESCO Observatory on “Women, Sport and Physical Education” include the gathering, analysis, organization and dissemination of information worldwide on issues relating to women, sport and physical education. The data and information will be collected from both governmental and non-governmental bodies, and from research and university institutions. A database will also be established in this regard and the Observatory will function, among others, as a “centre of information exchange”. It will therefore ensure more systematic collection of data and support advocacy in these areas.

15. Structure and legal status:

- The UNESCO Observatory involves governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the international sport movement interested in the promotion of women in all fields of sport, as well as the National Commissions for UNESCO through the selection of focal points.
- As mentioned above, it will be developed and maintained with the support of the Secretariat General of Sport of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. The official seat of the UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education will be the Secretariat General of Sport of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, in Athens, Greece (7, Kifissias Avenue, 115 23, Athens, Greece).

16. Its structure would comprise:

- (i) the Head of the Observatory, a senior public servant nominated by the Greek Government who will chair the steering committee;
- (ii) a Steering Group composed of representatives of the International Working Group (IWG) (one person), European Women and Sport Group (EWS) (one person), UNESCO (two persons: one expert from the Secretariat dealing with women and sport, one representative from CIGEPS) and the Head of the Observatory. The Steering Group should decide on the Observatory policy and develop the best possible ways to receive and disseminate the information with regard to women, sport and physical education. The Steering Group should hold one ordinary meeting in Greece every year. Costs for accommodation, food and travel will be borne by the Secretariat General of Sport of the Greek Government. Extraordinary meetings may take place on the proposal of the Steering Group when deemed necessary in other parts of the world following an invitation of a Member State of UNESCO or an organization contributing to the observatory. In this case the country, or organization, that hosts the extraordinary Steering Group meeting shall cover all accommodation, food and travel expenses for this meeting;

- (iii) the Network of focal points, selected by the National Commissions for UNESCO of each Member State, which will inform on a regular basis the Observatory about the situation and the promotion of women, sport and physical education in the countries;
- (iv) expert advisers to the Observatory, individuals or organizations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW), International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance (ICHPER-SD), Women Sport International (WSI), International Federation of Sport Medicine (IFSM) who would assist the Observatory on various aspects relating to women, sport and physical education;
- (v) other forms of cooperation and information: scientists or organizations that wish to cooperate with the UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education in order to exchange their experience, available study results and other valuable knowledge, thus contributing to the aims of the UNESCO Observatory, can contact for this purpose the focal points, the members of the Steering Group or the relevant UNESCO Observatory office in the Secretariat General of Sport, in Greece;
- (vi) the office staff.

17. Website structure

The website and organization of materials will be structured on several levels:

- (a) by region;
- (b) by stakeholder;
- (c) by topic (women in administration, women coaches, research, etc.);
- (d) by age.

C. Results to be achieved

18. The following results would be achieved:

- development of policies and programmes on women and sport harmonized;
- information on relevant areas gathered, organized, analysed and disseminated worldwide;
- research stimulated;
- public awareness increased and public opinion engaged;
- network of interested stakeholders and partners established;
- website established;
- information bulletin published;
- best practices shared.

D. Principal areas of interest

19. The Observatory will work in the following areas:

- sport as a tool for women's development;
- girls and women and physical education (curricula, teacher training, practising);
- women in sport administration;
- women as coaches;
- women as physical education teachers at school and university levels;
- women in research (physical education and sport);
- access to and quality of physical education for women, in formal and informal settings;
- women and physical education and sport in documents of United Nations agencies;
- publications on women and sport;
- women in elite sport;
- women and health and physical activity.

E. Activities

20. Activities will include:

- (a) online newsletter;
- (b) development of a database;
- (c) online forum for discussion on specific topics;
- (d) announcement of events;
- (e) production of articles;
- (f) elaboration of reports;
- (g) development of brochures promoting the objectives of the Observatory;
- (h) other activities to be determined.

F. Working languages

21. The Observatory's official working languages will be English and French. The website and all electronic and printed information will be available in these two languages.

G. Funding

22. The Secretariat General of Sport of the Hellenic Government will ensure the permanent funding of the maintenance and operation (technical costs as well as the human resources cost required for the running of the Observatory), and the cost of hosting the ordinary annual executive steering groups meetings in Greece of the UNESCO Observatory.

H. Evaluation

23. The evaluation is planned on three levels, namely the annual reports to be presented to the governing bodies of UNESCO submitted by the Head of the Observatory, the annual internal evaluation undertaken by the Steering Group and the external evaluation.

24. UNESCO may, at any time, and upon due notification to the Observatory, carry out an evaluation of its activities in order to determine:

- whether the Observatory makes an important contribution to the strategic goals of UNESCO;
- whether the activities set forth in the plan of the Observatory have been effectively pursued.

III. FEASIBILITY OF THE PROJECT SUBMITTED

25. From the previous paragraphs it is clear that the establishment of the Observatory is fully in line with UNESCO's objectives and programmes and will contribute to the improvement of the position of women in all fields of sport and at all levels, as well as to the effective promotion of gender equality and women empowerment.

26. The strong support on a permanent basis of the Greek Government for the establishment of the Observatory is a favourable precondition of sustainability, as is the Government's commitment permanently to support the maintenance and operation of the Observatory, both financially and logistically.

27. The gathering, organization, coordination and dissemination of all information at a common Observatory will contribute concretely to finding the most appropriate solutions to issues of concern to the international movement of women and sport, especially owing to the fact that the information will be derived from all possible governmental, non-governmental, academic and other sources.

28. The risks that UNESCO would incur in the establishment of the Observatory would be quasi inexistent, owing to the full support of the Greek Government in providing an appropriate state-of-the-art infrastructure and permanent funding for the Observatory.

29. The points mentioned above indicate that the viability of the proposed UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education is ensured and that UNESCO's governing bodies should give it due consideration.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

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

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling the importance of dealing with gender equity issues, adequate information and policy in women, sport and physical education matters, as well as the research required for the finding and advancement of solutions relating to those matters in all fields of sport and physical education of UNESCO,
2. Further recalling the recommendations of MINEPS IV,

3. Having examined document 175 EX/47,
4. Welcomes the proposal of the Greek Government to establish a UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education at the Secretariat General of Sport, Ministry of Culture, in Athens, Greece;
5. Takes note of the important opportunities for cooperation mentioned in this document;
6. Recommends that the General Conference at its 34th session:
 - (a) approve the establishment of the UNESCO Observatory on Women, Sport and Physical Education;
 - (b) authorize the Director-General to appoint one member to the Steering Group of the Observatory;
 - (c) authorize the Director-General to enter into a cooperation agreement with the Observatory, as appropriate.

ANNEX

UNESCO OBSERVATORY ESTIMATED BUDGET

Category of expenses	Estimated cost in Euros
Steering Group Members' hospitality:	11,000 (per year)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International air tickets • Accommodation • Maintenance • Local transportation 	
Website development:	20,000 (only once, the first year of operation)
Creation of logo:	2,000 (only once, the first year of operation)
Website maintenance and functioning:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic messages • Telephone lines (fixed and mobile) • Fax lines 	free of charge 40,000 (per year) 40,000 (per year)
Translation:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • French 	15,000 (per year) 15,000 (per year)
Staff: * ¹	
Five persons (specialized in foreign languages and computers, working in two shifts) (assigned from the staff of the Secretariat General of Sports)	
Equipment:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers • Laptops • Mobile phones 	(existing) 7,500 (only once, the first year of operation) 1,500 (only once, the first year of operation)
Miscellaneous:	70,000 (per year)
Extraordinary informative publications Organization of press conferences Seminars/conferences Research	
Total estimated cost the first year:	222,000
Total estimated cost per year:	191,000

¹ The salaries of the above-mentioned staff cost the Secretariat General an amount of 80,000 euros per year.